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REALISTIC FICTION FOR CHILDREN IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation proposes the use of thematic children's realistic fiction books as a means of encouraging natural EFL acquisition in eight to nine-year olds. The themes chosen invite teachers to help students cope with the struggling issue of bullying, while strengthening core values such as honesty and responsibility. Realistic fiction books enable students to explore day to day issues and to relate them with their own lives, while increasing the opportunity of self-exploration, self-expression, and group discussions. Choosing realistic fiction books that have a direct relevance to student's lives in EFL classrooms leaves an open door, for teachers and students, to use language in innovative ways and to develop alternative forms of comprehension. Both, teacher and students will be able to explore written texts in connection with the real world and their own experiences, generating a strong and meaningful learning of the foreign language. Ultimately, this dissertation promotes the use of children's realistic fiction books in an environment where literature is the driving force for teaching and acquiring EFL in a fun, natural and a more real way, while fostering honesty and responsibility as viable values for helping children face daily life issues, specifically bullying.

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation attempts to contribute with the research process in the field of Linguistics by using high-quality authentic children's realistic fiction books in the EFL classroom. This contribution also promotes and supports language development while exploring core values to deal with day to day issues, such as bullying. When developing children's reading fluency; their language, reading, writing, and thinking skills naturally grow as they are being exposed to language in context. Using children's realistic fiction books in the classroom leaves students with ample opportunities for hearing and using English in a varied of purposeful and authentic contexts that encourage and facilitate communication, social interaction and risk taking tasks in a low-anxiety environment.

This work includes the justification of the project's proposal, followed by the theoretical background that supports its validity and reliability. It starts with a description of the contributions of children's literature, as well as a brief explanation of what realistic fiction is and the benefits of incorporating it in the EFL classroom, where this proposal takes place. The next section discusses some of the theories of second language acquisition that support this dissertation and some EFL teaching and learning strategies that are necessary and useful in a foreign language setting. The above information constitutes the theoretical framework under which the idea that the use of children's realistic fiction books will better meet EFL learning needs of young learners and influence in their ability to deal with common affairs is sustained.

The practical section of this dissertation presents the implementation of children's realistic fiction books in the English third grade class at Colegio Terranova. The main purpose of this practical segment of the dissertation is to provide teachers with an alternative way to teach English as a foreign language in a contextualized manner. In this way, students live memorable experiences in connection with the books chosen, that help them gain ownership over their learning, while exploring life issues, such as bullying, in connection with their

needs, and experiences. At the same time, they will have the opportunity to strengthen the values of honesty and responsibility as these values constitute the targeted ones in the lesson plans developed for the purpose of this dissertation.

The selection of good quality children's realistic fiction books was a complex process due to the wide variety of literary pieces, as well as for the issues that were going to be treated with the children. Finally, three books were selected; one, dealing with the issue of Bullying and two with the values of Honesty and Responsibility to be used with the third grade English class at Colegio Terranova: *The Recess Queen* by Alexis O' Neil; *Strega Nona* by Tomie de Paola; and *Jamaica's Find* by Juanita Havill. The above books become the key element of this project, as these are the source from which the lesson plans and activities came from, in order to nurture the language learning process and to deal with the topic of bullying framed on the values of responsibility and honesty.

To determine the usefulness and authenticity of this dissertation, a micro experimental design was applied to the third graders of Terranova School during the month of November 2014 and the first three days of December 2014. The 20 students from Third Grade 'D' were part of the experimental group and the 23 students from Third Grade 'C' were part of the control group. Groups were randomly selected to ensure that every participant had an equal possibility of being in the experimental group and subject of manipulation, or in the control group where they are not manipulated. This random assignment guaranteed that there is no pre-existing condition that will influence the variables and mess up the results. Then, a pre-test and a post-test were applied to both groups in order to compare results. Finally, a total of nine lesson plans of ninety-minutes each and divided into forty-minute periods of class were applied to the experimental group. Each one was analyzed taking into account the theoretical points described in further sections. This dissertation ends with a set of conclusions and recommendations that invite further research.

JUSTIFICATION

Children learn English as a foreign language by means of already made texts, simplified editions of books, graded readers, artificial dialogues, and online EFL platforms. This way of learning the language leaves students with limited resources in front of the real big spectrum that life in English presents. Moreover, teachers have always feared the use of authentic literature in the EFL classroom as a result of their lack of knowledge about how to explore it in the class, generating the waste of the advantages and benefits that the integration of quality literature can provide to children who start learning this language. What if we innovate the language teaching field by incorporating children's realistic fiction books in the EFL classroom in order to encourage the use of English and to help children deal with bullying by reinforcing honesty and responsibility? The answer to this question leads to the rationale and hypotheses of this dissertation.

With this background information and after analyzing Colegio Terranova's syllabus, it was confirmed that the language arts program uses a limited amount of literature to help students become proficient communicators in English. Moreover, the program lacks the specific use of children's realistic fiction as part of thematic units and lesson plans to nurture the use of EFL in a contextualized way. Children's realistic fiction books will inspire student's imagination and creativity to learn to deal with daily matters, while motivating them to learn the target language.

In my experience as a teacher, I have always wondered about how demanding and challenging is learning a foreign language. On one hand, there are linguistic and cultural obstacles that create distance between student's needs and language learning; on the other hand, the teacher finds it hard to bridge this gap. I realized that in the language-teaching/learning process, context permeates language. In this sense, this project aims at finding out a new and different way of connecting language with the interests and value development process of students, so that learning becomes significant and real. It seeks to use children's realistic fiction in the EFL classroom, which is nothing but a mirror of real life, as a

tool for students to attain the target language as naturally and significantly as possible and, at the same time, for them to cultivate the values of honesty and responsibility as a resourceful way of dealing with the problem of bullying.

SCHOOL INFORMATION

Colegio Terranova is located at Calle Las Rieles, San Juan Alto de Cumbayá, Quito. It is a private educational institution that provides students with a bilingual education while inspiring creativity, critical thinking, integrity and leadership. The school is committed to academic excellence by promoting student learning and personal growth through an IB Primary Years Programme. The school counts with high qualified teachers and personnel, academic and discipline support programs, professional development opportunities, and with up-to-date technology that serves as a learning and support tool.

I decided to choose Colegio Terranova mainly for one reason. I am convinced of the immense potential education has of empowering children to change their lives, their community and the world. This school's vision and mission are aligned with my belief, as what they want to develop principled leaders that can generate changes for the future and cope with the demands of the world with positivism, determination and autonomy. This is not just a say. At Colegio Terranova, they work with units of inquiry, based on themes of global significance that aid children in becoming inquirers, thinkers, communicators, risk-takers, reflective, and caring individuals with the capacity to generate changes.

Colegio Terranova has 1.100 students approximately and is divided into three sections: Early Childhood – Prekinder to First Grade, Lower School - Grades 2 to 6, and Upper School - Grades 7 to 12. Class size is small with twenty two to twenty five students per class in Lower School, which according to the National Education Policy Center is of great benefit in regards to teacher's effectiveness and student's outcomes. Consequently, class size (20 and 23 in each third grade correspondingly) is of important consideration for the purpose of this thesis.

Based on the PYP (Primary Years Program) that goes from Prekinder to Grade 5, the school believes in the development of the whole child both, inside and outside the classroom. The PYP is managed by the IB (International Baccalaureate) that aims at making the students into inquirers, thinkers, communicators, risk takers, knowledgeable, principled, caring, open-minded, well-balanced, and reflective. In this school, the curriculum is centered in transdisciplinary themes of global significance and 73 percent of it is done in English. The heart of the matter here is that because most of the children in this school belong to a middle-high socio economic status according to Ecuadorian standards, they have more possibilities of traveling abroad and exploring the target language in a different context. Furthermore, the school offers a bilingual program, and students have an A2 level of English proficiency (according to the Common European Framework of Reference)¹ that enables them to understand and use simple sentences and expressions in relation to their immediate surroundings, can communicate familiar and routine matters, and can describe in simple terms aspects of their immediate environment.

OBJECTIVES

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

To incorporate the use of quality realistic fiction in the teaching of English as a foreign language to help students understand and deal with bullying while encouraging honesty and responsibility.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To determine whether an increase in the quantity and quality of children's realistic fiction books in the EFL classroom offers children unique opportunities to explore the

¹ Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Council of Europe. United States: Cambridge University Press.

target language in context in order to improve their listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

2. To establish whether the use of children's realistic fiction books, helps children expand their frames of reference in order to gain a more in depth understanding of day to day issues, such as bullying, while nurturing honesty and responsibility as core values, which may lead to more value oriented behavior while learning EFL.
3. To specify whether the use of realistic fiction books, selected according to age, linguistic knowledge and particular interests and needs of students, will help children realize and take comfort in knowing that that their issues are not unique and that they are not alone in the world.

PROPOSAL

It is well known that reading is a major pillar for the development of the intellect. In this sense, the direct contribution of quality realistic fiction books in the children's teaching-learning process, focuses not only on expanding their vocabulary and improvement of reading and writing in English, but also in creating and fostering the usage of the language in connection with the children's lives and experiences. Literature in the classroom will benefit the intellectual ability of children, while providing social skills to help them cope with the world in a creative, fun and constructive way.

Thus, with the increase in the quantity and quality of children's literature in children between eight and nine years old at Colegio Terranova, the effective and efficient development of various skills in the learning of English as a foreign language is expected. Moreover, this linguistic experience will be enhanced by the benefits of using realistic fiction books to explore daily life issues through value's nourishment.

HYPOTHESIS

1. The incorporation of quality realistic fiction for children in the teaching of English as a foreign language enables students to improve their language proficiency and to learn to deal with difficult life situations, in this case bullying.
2. The proper selection of realistic fiction and its effective use in the EFL classroom help students gain ownership over their learning while promoting core values such as honesty and responsibility.

CHAPTER I: SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION THEORY

1.1. STEPHEN KRASHEN'S NATURAL APPROACH

Dr. Stephen Krashen is an expert in the field of Linguistics and professor emeritus at the University of Southern California. He states that there is no essential distinction between the way we acquire our first language and other languages, and affirms that humans have an inborn capacity that guides the process of language learning. His theories of second/foreign language acquisition summarized in what he referred to as the Monitor Model served as the basis of what became to be known as The Natural Approach.

The Natural Approach is a method of language teaching he developed in conjunction with Tracy Terrell, which affirms that “language learning is a reproduction of the way humans naturally acquire their native language”. It is based on the premise that language is a medium for communication, and that vocabulary is of supreme importance as language is, by its own nature, lexicon.² Language acquisition is intended to be nurtured naturally in the classroom

² The Natural Approach

<<http://www.myenglishpages.com/blog/natural-approach/#.VElBYGddWSp>> Access:
(March 14, 2014)

and, explicit error correction and grammar instruction are de-emphasized. These result in classrooms where the input is understandable and thought-provoking, so as for students to be intrinsically motivated.

This approach has some important advantages to consider. It is simple to use, it can be easily adapted to a variety of situations like, second or foreign language programs and bilingual programs; and can be adjusted to deal with different learning styles. The Natural Approach is defined by five interrelated hypotheses.

1.2. THE FIVE HYPOTHESES OF THE NATURAL APPROACH

1.2.1. THE ACQUISITION-LEARNING HYPOTHESIS

The acquisition-learning distinction is the most important and influential among linguists and language practitioners. According to Krashen, there are two distinct systems in speech production. Acquisition or the 'acquired system' is a subconscious process, focused on the communicative act of speakers, very similar to the one used when acquiring the first language. Learning or the 'learned system', on the other hand, is a conscious process that results from formal teaching (i.e. grammar rules or form).³ In this theory, communication plays a vital role in language learning. Therefore, second language teachers must encourage the use of language for authentic purposes, in order for students to understand messages that will let them 'acquire' the language, instead of just 'learn' it.

1.2.2. THE MONITOR HYPOTHESIS

This hypothesis explains the interrelationship between acquisition and learning. As claimed by Krashen, the acquisition system initiates an utterance and the learning system

³ Krashen, Stephen D. (1988). *Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning*. United States, Prentice-Hall International.

‘monitors’ the utterance to plan, edit, and correct errors when meeting three requirements: the second language learner has enough disposition of time, thinks about correctness and knows the rule. For Krashen, the role of the ‘monitor’ should be limited, varies in regards to its use (over-users, under-users and optimal-users), and can force the learner to focus more on accuracy instead than on fluency.⁴ Second language teachers’ goal should be to achieve communicative competence (use language accurately and fluently) in their students.

1.2.3. THE INPUT HYPOTHESIS

This hypothesis is Krashen’s effort to elucidate how a second language is acquired and states that the learner advances when he/she receives comprehensible input that is one step beyond his/her current language ability.⁵ Comprehensible input is defined as the messages the learner understands, although he/she cannot produce them. It is put in a central place in the curriculum and the classroom is the source of it for second language learners.

1.2.4. THE NATURAL ORDER HYPOTHESIS

This hypothesis suggests that learners acquire language in a predictable order. This order does not depend on the nature of the grammatical features involved (simplicity or complexity), and is independent of the learner’s first language background, age, and deliberate teaching.⁶ Therefore, teachers should keep in mind that there are certain structures of language easier to acquire than others and that these should be taught in an order that is favorable to learning. According to this hypothesis, errors are signs of language development and are expected to occur, for the natural order to take its course.

⁴ Krashen, Stephen D. (1988). *Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning*. United States, Prentice-Hall International.

⁵ Improving second Language Education

<<http://www2.education.ualberta.ca/staff/olenka.Bilash/best%20of%20bilash/krashen.html>> Access: (March 16, 2014)

⁶ Krashen, S. (2003). *Explorations in Language Acquisition and Use*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

1.2.5. THE AFFECTIVE FILTER HYPOTHESIS

Finally, this fifth hypothesis manifests Krashen's view that, although some emotional variables like motivation, anxiety, stress and self-confidence do not directly impact acquisition, they prevent learning. He claims that the affective filter is elicited by these variables and that learners with a 'low-filter' are better equipped for success in second language acquisition, but that when the filter is 'up', it delays language acquisition.⁷ In second language classes it is necessary to promote an error-free and risk-taking environment to make students feel safe to take in and produce language.

In a nutshell, Krashen & Terrell's Natural Approach, along with Krashen's five hypotheses, state that language acquisition takes place when speakers are concerned not with the form, but with the messages they are conveying and understanding. It advocates the need for spoken production to emerge naturally, and emphasizes the need to make learners as relaxed as possible during the learning process. This approach provides this thesis with the necessary foundation as it focuses more on language acquisition (an unconscious process developed through using language meaningfully), than on language learning (consciously learning or discovering rules about the language). Meaning is considered as the essence of language and vocabulary (not grammar) is the heart of language.

1.3. FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING/ LEARNING STRATEGIES

There has been a major change in the field of language learning and teaching in the last twenty years that emphasizes the role of learners and the learning process rather than the one of teachers and teaching. Parallel to this change, the kind of strategies the students use to understand, learn, or recall the information, and the ones used by teachers to make that happen is one of the main interest of researchers dealing with foreign language learning.⁸

⁷ Krashen, S. (2003). *Explorations in Language Acquisition and Use*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

⁸ Stern, H.H. (1992). *Issues and Options in Language Teaching*. Oxford: OUP.

Language learning strategies, being actions, techniques, behaviors, or tactics, are used by all learners to better process and manage the new amount of information that is provided to them. Either consciously or unconsciously, learners of a second language need to find the best way to solve the different tasks and the new input given by the teacher. Since learners vary enormously in regards to age, personality, motivation, self-concept, and learning style, there is no best learning/teaching strategy that can be applied to all.⁹

Still, some core elements are the basis of all good language instruction like interactive lessons with hands-on activities and cooperative learning, encouragement of creativity and discovery, flexibility, opportunities for all students to feel successful, among the most important.¹⁰ This aspect was considered in the lesson plans used for the purpose of this dissertation.

Thus, it is essential that teachers and, specifically, second/foreign language teachers use strategies not as a series of rules and structures to be used with students but as innovative and adjustable tools to aid them in the understanding and communication of meaning, which is aligned with Krashen's and Terrel's Natural Approach. According to research, when students are engaged in communication that is meaningful to them, that is communication that touches on their real lives; more learning occurs because more of the content and structure of communication enters long-term memory.¹¹

It is necessary to carefully consider how classroom activities should be organized and structured, considering the students' particularities, to gradually encourage greater independent use of the foreign language and the vocabulary that accompanies it.

⁹ Stern, H.H. (1992). *Issues and Options in Language Teaching*. Oxford: OUP.

¹⁰ *Strategies for EFL Teachers*. n.d. < <http://suu.edu/ed/fso/resources/tennessee-esl-resource-center-strategies-for-esl-teachers.pdf> > .Access: (March 20, 2014)

¹¹ Id.

1.3.1. MODELING OF THE TARGET LANGUAGE

Certainly, when learning a foreign language, students need to hear to the target language in order to gain competency in the four skills, and to have chances of speaking it. But how easy is it to use the target language in a foreign language classroom and what are some of the benefits and challenges of using it?

Although language teachers find it hard to balance first language and foreign language usage in their classrooms, it is crucial for the language learning process to use the target language. One important reason of doing so is that students need to have a context as closest as possible to the foreign language context, in the interest of giving them maximum exposure to that language. Another fundamental argument is that, by using the target language in the classroom, students are receiving more comprehensible input (Krashen). In this way, they can learn more complex language structures. Using the target language provides a model for students in relation to language production and the attitude towards it. Finally, research states that using the target language encourages natural acquisition, whereas first language usage hinders this process, by distracting attention from the object of the student's learning. Additionally, target language use in the classroom improves student's confidence with comprehension and lowers the risk factor for student use (affective filter) in new contexts. This relates directly to Stephen Krashen's work.¹²

Yet, there are some challenges necessary to consider when using the target language in the classroom like the fact that students can resist themselves to use it, causing distress. Using it without bearing in mind the student's ability/behavior is purposeless and disadvantageous because it can become boring and over-repetitive. Teachers have the tendency to put a lot of emphasis on their use of the target language, leaving aside its real purpose and leading to

¹² Dickson, Peter. (1996). *Using the Target Language: A view from the classroom*. United States: National Foundation for Educational Research.

passivity from the student's part. Lastly, there is a concern about the teacher's own language proficiency and teaching experience in the target language.¹³

In spite of the mentioned difficulties and as with any other language teaching/learning strategy, target language use must be adapted to the reality of the classroom to provide appropriate challenge activities for students. It is necessary to develop routines with the classroom since the very beginning, to support students with language use and comprehension through picture prompts, to incorporate the target language in daily routines, to ask the same questions and give the same commands repeatedly, and to use 'compensation strategies' not only to facilitate student learning, but to model how to use strategies for communication.¹⁴

1.3.2. INFERENCE VOCABULARY FROM CONTEXT

Within the last few years, vocabulary has become an important aspect in EFL/ESL classrooms. Building vocabulary is of vital importance for success when learning a foreign language. It is an ongoing process that takes time, practice and systematic repetition, but it is not something a student can memorize. In fact, when students build vocabulary knowledge, they are able to use the language, and language use enables them to increase their vocabulary knowledge. This contextualized approach of vocabulary learning helps students learn vocabulary through authentic interaction.¹⁵

Learning vocabulary in context requires the teacher to identify high frequency words (which are words that occur regularly in daily conversation and that let the students write and speak comprehensively), low frequency words (which are the most difficult words to teach

¹³ DICKSON, Peter. Using the Target Language: A view from the classroom. United States of America. *National Foundation For Educational Research*, 1996, p.p. 9-16.

¹⁴ Id.

¹⁵ MEBRING, Jeff. Developing Vocabulary in Second Language Acquisition: From Theories to the Classroom. n.d.
<<http://www.hpu.edu/CHSS/LangLing/TESOL/ProfessionalDevelopment/200680TWPfall06/03Mehring.pdf>> Access: (March 26, 2014)

and understand). Hence, creating vocabulary lists from books students read enables them to retain and use the new words.¹⁶

As a matter of fact, reading is an important skill of language learning, and is also a helpful vehicle of language teaching. Second/foreign language reading research studies mention the possible advantages of reading in nurturing vocabulary learning. It is precisely, Stephen Krashen, who based on his Input Hypothesis manifests that reading can give learners a considerable amount of comprehensible input for acquiring new words in context.¹⁷

As reading presents word items in various meaningful contexts and provides learners with numerous experiences to enrich word learning, it enables students to run into learned words again and again to expand sight vocabulary, to infer the meaning of a word from context clues, causing vocabulary growth and language development to a notably large extent.

1.3.3. SMALL GROUPING IN EFL LESSONS

Small group work (including pair work) has been recommended in second/foreign language contexts from a pedagogical perspective. But, recently, it has undertaken greater significance in the psycholinguistic field because of findings on two equivalent matters: the role of comprehensible input in second language acquisition and the nature of non-native/non-native talk (interlanguage talk).¹⁸

Pedagogically speaking, small grouping is considered a resourceful tool in second/foreign language classrooms as it increases language practice opportunities by

¹⁶ MEBRING, Jeff. Developing Vocabulary in Second Language Acquisition: From Theories to the Classroom. n.d.
<<http://www.hpu.edu/CHSS/LangLing/TESOL/ProfessionalDevelopment/200680TWPfall06/03Mehring.pdf>> Access: (March 26, 2014)

¹⁷ KRASHEN, Stephen. (1989). We Acquire Vocabulary and Spelling by Reading: Additional Evidence for the input hypothesis. *Modern Language Journal*.
< <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1540-4781.1989.tb05325.x/pdf> > Access: (March 26, 2014)

¹⁸ Chaudron, Craig. (1988). *Second language classrooms: Research on Teaching and Learning*. United States: Cambridge University Press.

providing students with more time to practice the new language and being active agents of their learning. In this way, the quality of their talk ameliorates because face-to-face conversations come naturally as opposed to conventionalized conversation provided by teacher-centered lessons. Conversations are not limited to isolated sentences, leading to discourse competence, not just a sentence grammar. Students can take roles and choose positions to practice language functions such as inferring, hypothesizing, generalizing, and disagreeing, (which are skills normally developed by teachers) and grow on communicative competence.¹⁹

In addition to the mentioned arguments in favor of using small group work in ESL/EFL settings, it is necessary to indicate that this teaching/learning strategy also helps to individualize instruction. In doing so, the student's distinctive abilities such as comprehension and production skills; fluency and accuracy skills; interests, cognitive styles, prior language learning experiences, and target language needs can be taken into account by the teacher. Working in groups also promotes a positive affective atmosphere as it allows 'exploratory talk', where students feel supported and comfortable if making mistakes, being uncertain or self-contradictory about something. Finally and consequently, small group work motivates learners.²⁰

According to psycholinguistic evidence, the linguistic input given to learners, like the speech caregivers address to children learning their first language is adjusted in different ways to make it comprehensible and becomes a simplified version of the full adult native speaker's language diversity. This 'foreigner talk' is characterized by short and syntactically less complex utterances, higher-frequency vocabulary words, and the avoidance of colloquial expressions. Besides, it has been shown that native speakers not only modify language, but also the structure of conversations when talking with non-native speakers. These linguistic

¹⁹ Chaudron, Craig. (1988). *Second language classrooms: Research on Teaching and Learning*. United States: Cambridge University Press.

²⁰ Id.

and conversational adaptations come naturally because speakers are focused on what they are saying to non-native speakers rather than on how they are saying it.²¹

There is also valuable evidence sustaining the idea that the more comprehensible input learners receive the faster and better they learn, which is explained in Krashen's input hypothesis. Learners must be able to negotiate the new input to modify language in a way that is comprehensible to them, although they cannot provide each other with the accurate grammatical and socio-linguistic input that native speakers can. Group work becomes a viable way for optimizing this 'interlanguage talk'.²²

Briefly, small grouping in EFL lessons increases the amount and variety of language practice in terms of the quantity of talk produced, of negotiation work produced, and of comprehensible input obtained. In the case of this dissertation, small grouping becomes relevant, as it enables the teacher to promote the use of the English language among students while decreasing tension and, helping the teacher control the students' affective filter. Working in small groups increased the learners's motivation as students exchange ideas, learn through interaction with their peers, and do the assigned activities faster and more easily while using English in a relaxed and less artificial manner.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE IN THE TEACHING OF EFL

2.1. CONTRIBUTIONS OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Learning a language requires mastering four main language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. When considering this, it is possible to learn to read and write in English through written literature, as it imparts not only a foundation for written English, but also knowledge of the real world. Although this method has its difficulties, as the need to ensure

²¹ Chaudron, Craig. (1988). *Second language classrooms: Research on Teaching and Learning*. United States: Cambridge University Press.

²² Id.

that the books read are framed in a period of time that is linguistically consistent with the student, it can greatly help students to successfully learn English.²³

In this regard, it is worth mentioning that when selecting literature it is necessary to consider the children's age, author's writing style and student's reading level in order to guarantee the benefits that the book can offer. It is also crucial to choose books that depict characters from a true and honest view of the human condition, from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds; that are appropriate to the child's interests and needs and that reveal grounded solutions to life's problems in easy-to-read written language.²⁴

Children need to be in contact with a variety of written texts that will let them consider the additional role that literature has recently undertaken. This includes empowering students with critical thinking skills to nurture socio-emotional learning, which is an essential part in the development of children's language and literacy skills.²⁵ It is, precisely, through the use of children's literature that educators can address the student's own singular interests, needs and abilities in order for them to make sense of their environment and construct knowledge. Indeed, very little of the learning component is the result of direct instruction; instead as children face new experiences, knowledge is modified impacting the child's linguistic, social and emotional development.

Likewise, book reading on a regular basis has been found to have the potential to generate interactional situations that enrich language development. It maximizes the types of experiences that anticipate language learning and can also surpass the power of oral conversations. It offers children the chance to recognize new vocabulary embedded in diverse

²³ BROOKS, Charlie. How to Learn English Through Literature
<http://www.ehow.com/how_7848251_learn-english-through-literature.html>
Access: (December 16, 2013)

²⁴ Freemann, Ivonne, Fox, Mem & Horacek, Judy. (2008). *Reading Magic: Why Reading Aloud to Our Children Will Change Their Lives Forever*. United States: Mariner Books.

²⁵ DICKINSON K., David, Juli A. Griffith, Roberta Michnick Golinkoff, and Kathy Hirsh-Pasek. How Reading Books Foster Language Development around the World.
<<http://www.hindawi.com/journals/cdr/2012/602807/>> Access: (January 23, 2014)

grammatical constructions, as the same words are used in simple sentences, offering them a tacit lesson on word usage and increasing the range of its use in comparison with everyday conversations. Literature also enhances children's lives and language because it encourages the linkage of interest and attention. Books portray colorful illustrations and characters that are appealing to children. Through book reading students are required to be actively engaged in responsive interactions, based on their interests that move them away from the text itself and yield to more varied vocabulary and sentence construction.²⁶

Literature is a splendid source of significant input in EFL settings if used by teachers not as a filler type activity, but as an integral part of instruction. Its suitability relies on its universality because literature is present in all cultures and it conveys similar themes like life, death, nature, etc; it offers true and original inputs as it does not minimize experience. Books offer students, as well, an alternative to find relevance between the events and ideas expressed throughout the story and their personal lives, and the possibility to encounter diverse topics and language expressions in a resourceful compilation of written texts. In essence, literature is attractive to the reader because it treats well-known contents in an inviting and captivating manner and has an evocative capacity to express lots of ideas in few words. Besides, the reader can interpret the text in different ways which creates a setting where interaction and oral communication is prompted.²⁷

Finally, it is necessary to mention that literature contributes and promotes language learning because it helps children understand other cultures, ideas and beliefs, while encouraging creativity and benefiting their writing skills. Learners become familiar with the use of language in context, so that social and affective aspects inserted in literary pieces are addressed. This lets the teacher adjust teaching to individual differences and styles. Literature is a great device for generating moments for debate and critical thinking, as it takes students to

²⁶ DICKINSONN K., David, Juli A. Griffith, Roberta Michnick Golinkoff, and Kathy Hirsh-Pasek. How Reading Books Foster Language Development around the World. <<http://www.hindawi.com/journals/cdr/2012/602807/>> Access: (January 23, 2014)

²⁷ KHATIB, Mohammad and Amir Hossein Rahimi. (2012). Literature and Language Teaching. *Journal of Academic and Applied Studies*, Par. 5. < <http://www.academians.org/articles/june4.pdf> > Access: (February 10, 2014)

new places, not only in terms of development, but metaphorically as reading transports them to new scenarios.²⁸

Literature in this dissertation becomes of vital importance, since the children's realistic fiction books selected constitute not only the source of inspiration for the development of the thematic lesson plans, but also the starting point that leads to the use of English as a foreign language in connection with the students' needs and interests. Literature enabled children to explore the issue of bullying more effectively as the books became allies that portrayed real experiences with which children felt identified. The use of literature to address bullying is beneficial because it improves the ability of students to cope with problems as they develop social sensitivity, respect and honesty.

2.2. BIBLIOTHERAPY

Basically, bibliotherapy is to use books to help people solve the problems they may face at any given time. It consists of selecting the relevant literary material to the children's life situation. It may consist only of reading, or can be supplemented with discussions or a recreational activity. The book can be used to help the child explore or discuss an issue that he/she initially refused to deal with.²⁹

Putting bibliotherapy into practice in the elementary classroom can be very rewarding for both the students and the teacher. Teachers who use bibliotherapy in the classroom need to select appropriate reading materials and adjust them to student's particular needs in order to help them in the development of self-awareness, conflict-resolution skills, perspective-taking, and problem-understanding. Any literary production, including reading (fiction, nonfiction, or poetry), creative writing, and storytelling, can be used. In-class reading time and guided group

²⁸ KHATIB, Mohammad and Amir Hossein Rahimi. (2012). Literature and Language Teaching. *Journal of Academic and Applied Studies*, Par. 5.

< <http://www.academians.org/articles/june4.pdf> > Access: (February 10, 2014)

²⁹ Sullivan, A. K. & Strang, H. R. (2002). *Bibliotherapy in the classroom: Using literature to promote the development of emotional intelligence*. Childhood Education.

discussions allow students to be aware about the problems of other children and to sympathize with their feelings.³⁰

The logic behind the use of books to help children deal with behavioral and emotional difficulties, or as a teaching tool, relies in the assumption that readers establish a connection with similar characters appearing in the story. This identification gives the reader a time to get a new vista of the problems he/she may be facing, which leads to liberate emotion, new behavior and ways of connecting with others. Besides, its application is justified in schools because teachers know the socio-emotional and educational needs of the students.³¹

Due to bibliotherapy's versatility in its use and implementation (it takes different forms and can be used in limitless settings), its effectiveness is something hard to judge. Though, it has been found true, according to research, that bibliotherapy works in specific groups, including the ones with emotional disorders and anxiety problems. Another important aspect to consider is that its efficacy lies in the quality of book selection. Even if, both, fiction and non-fiction books have served the purpose, still what matters most is that the information presented is precise, with realistic characters and outcomes, so as not to give the reader untrue aspirations³². In this sense, children's realistic fiction becomes a great resource.

Despite its numerous benefits, bibliotherapy encounters some limitations, basically in regards to the availability of children's literature for specific purposes, a lack of interest in the child in reading and denial in accepting a problem; and, a lack of knowledge from the part of the facilitator about the child's development, and on how to use and select appropriate books.³³ Like most teaching strategies, bibliotherapy is a tool to be modified and adapted to a specific context for dealing with the varied emotional, behavioral and social issues of students.

³⁰ Sullivan, A.K. & Strang, H.R. (2002). *Bibliotherapy in the classroom: Using Literature to promote the development of emotional intelligence*. Childhood Education.

³¹ Id.

³² Bibliotherapy. n/d. <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bibliotherapy>>
Access: (February 23, 2014)

³³ Id.

It is just until recently that children's books address touchy subjects such as loss, divorce and bullying. Children are highly susceptible to their surroundings and that makes it imperative to give them a time to share thoughts and emotions. Bibliotherapy is a pathway for communication and a way out for children to set in motion what they already know and to explore their feelings. Literature dealing with life crisis issues is a wonderful resource to aid them in comprehending the world and to be in tune with others in our society, even when children are not directly distressed by a tough situation.³⁴

Bibliotherapy becomes handy in this dissertation since bullying is a touchy subject that has been traditionally disregarded. Using books in the classroom as an alternative way to learn to deal with daily issues became an innovative way to aid children in having a more in depth understanding of a problem they are facing in order to find better, and more permanent and positive solutions to it. By reading stories about characters who have successfully resolved a problem similar to their own, students are more willing to overcome problems. This is precisely one of the important areas of work in this dissertation, and children's realistic fiction books served as discussion openers that let children identify and validate their feelings in order to discover possible coping skills and take action, while using English in a natural and stress-free environment.

2.3. THEMATIC REALISTIC FICTION: BULLYING/RESPONSIBILITY AND HONESTY

Literature-based thematic units are considered to work extremely well in ESL/EFL classrooms. Actually, its use is supported by theories of second language acquisition, mainly the one discussed by Stephen Krashen in the Input Hypothesis. This hypothesis has been previously discussed in this project and it is the leading component of the five hypotheses that form part of the Natural Approach. In support of this, teachers should offer learners sufficient

³⁴ LOWE, Danielle F. Helping Children Cope Through Literature. n.d.
<<http://forumonpublicpolicy.com/spring09papers/archivespr09/lowe.pdf>>
Access: (February 25, 2014)

comprehensible input through authentic resources and diverse contextualized media, in a caring and motivating classroom environment.³⁵

Because literature-based thematic units, specifically thematic realistic fiction, stresses the use of authentic materials to integrate listening, speaking, reading and writing, they are a fantastic way to increment understandable input in the EFL classroom and lower student's affective filters. Thus, language development and content knowledge are promoted, as well as, vocabulary and comprehension. Contextualized vocabulary instruction using content-related material has proved to be of great benefit in EFL learners' literacy development. This can be attained through teacher read-alouds and guided class discussions; shared reading and cooperative work; and, through Sustained silent Reading (SSR sessions).³⁶

Consequently, thematic realistic fiction becomes a great and handy tool to bridge content with literacy development. Through the incorporation of quality children's realistic fiction books, daily life issues (content), relevant to the student's needs and interests, like bullying, can be introduced. The students can learn to deal with issues like this one by stressing values, such as honesty and responsibility, as a counterpart, to expand their horizon and thinking skills. The teacher should immerse all these in context and always acknowledge the EFL learning foci.

Bullying is an up-to-date issue not only among children, but concerning the whole school environment, and the world. Bullying was chosen as an issue to be treated in this dissertation because Terranova has put special emphasis in dealing with this particular phenomenon to avoid having serious cases of it in their school. In fact, this school has been promoting preventive campaigns not only among students, but also among parents to assist them in understanding the relevance of the topic; in acknowledging them on how to properly identify when is it bullying or not; in offering them different perspectives related to the topic;

³⁵ WILSON, Kristi M. Literature-Based Instruction in the ESL Classroom. n.d.
< <http://kristimwilson.files.wordpress.com/2012/03/literature-based-esl.pdf> >

Access: (May 13, 2014)

³⁶ Id.

and, in aiding them to find possible solutions around this matter. Students in the Third grade classrooms were familiarized with the topic and enjoyed discussing the issue even though they had already done it as a school.

For the purpose of this dissertation, bullying has been defined as unwanted aggressive behavior which involves a real or perceived imbalance, and framed in the school environment. The behavior has to be reiterative or likely to be repeated over time. There are three types of bullying: verbal which starts with teasing and goes up to threatening to cause harm; social, which can be leaving someone out on purpose or embarrassing someone in public; and the physical one, that goes from kicking to destroying personal belongings.³⁷

A number of campaigns for the prevention/intervention of bullying have taken place in schools around the world. The heart of the matter here is that there is a misconception from the part of teachers and students in identifying and understanding what exactly bullying is. There is a general tendency to blame the bully, leaving aside the reason of his/her behavior, and the group of bystanders that allow the bully to do what he/she does. The Bully-Bystander Phenomenon (discussed in one of the lesson plans used in this project), is a 'three-party characterization' of bullying that evidences the social interconnection there is among bully, victim and the audience of bystanders observing or participating directly or indirectly in the action.³⁸

Teaching the value of honesty to children is a great way of helping them develop character and a solid self-esteem. They learn that when being honest they are not only doing the right thing, but living with the choices they make. Realistic fiction books work well in this matter because stories can picture consequences for not being honest in a way that grabs the

³⁷ Understanding and Preventing Bullying in Our Society. The American Psychoanalytic Association. n.d.

<http://www.apsa.org/About_APsaA/Position_Statements/Understanding_and_Preventing_Bullying.aspx>

Access: (May 23, 2014)

³⁸ Id.

child's interest and that enables him/her to identify either with the plot, with the characters, or with both.³⁹

On top of that, honesty and bullying are two interconnected issues. The common thinking process of children is to believe that because they are telling the truth, they are being honest. But, there is a difference between telling the truth and being honest. Sometimes, the intention behind honesty is to say whatever is desired without compassion or taking responsibility for the consequences of what is said; this is very close to bullying. Another nuance of honesty is the tendency to say something in the 'nicest way possible'. Here, again, there is a risk of causing harm by letting words out, because the message is not clearly conveyed. The last 'shade' of honesty has as its underlying intention compassion and care for other, but it is important to reflect if what is said will actually help the other person or not.

The above nuances of honesty work in a very subtle manner, especially among children who are just learning to understand what is to be honest. Ergo, educators have the enormous responsibility of aiding students in getting a more reflective perspective in regards to honesty. A good tool to do it is by using these three questions before saying something: Is it true? Is it necessary? Is it kind? Honesty was another theme treated in the lesson plans, as part of this dissertation.

Responsibility is the 'closer' of the thematic realistic fiction approach that has been part of this dissertation. The theme was chosen mainly because it was considered that, at the end, being honest, not bullying someone or being a bystander of it, are all our own responsibilities. Children need to understand that they are the ones responsible for their actions and to acknowledge and accept the choices they have made in order to avoid blaming others. This was a different approach to the ones previously offered at Terranova in regards of how to cope with the issue of bullying. Students were enthusiastic as they came to realize that

³⁹ Klee, Mary Beth. (2003). *Core Virtues: A Literature-Based Program in Character Education*. United States: Link Inst.

it is the choices of their actions what matters at the end. The Bystander Effect or the theory of diffusion of responsibility, presented throughout the lesson plans in this dissertation, taught them to take responsibility and stand up in situations where they see an unwanted behavior, even when there are other students around them that could also take action. Therefore, they became aware of the importance of relying in themselves, instead of others and to be morally responsible.

Finally, it is fundamental to state that the thematic realistic fiction used for the purpose of this dissertation, was introduced as an innovative and creative means to develop EFL language in a contextualized way, while reaching and bridging the student's needs and motivations through the exploration of current issues and values. Quality children's realistic fiction stories give the students the experience of living through the trials and the thrills of the characters appearing in them. Consequently, children learn to reflect, decide, rethink their views, and grow, changing their character.

CHAPTER III: CHILDREN'S REALISTIC FICTION IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

3.1. QUALITY CHILDREN'S REALISTIC FICTION AND LANGUAGE

Long-established structurally based texts and the recent, integrated, communicative approaches might not be enough for the demands of language classes. On the other hand, a literature-based syllabus that relies extensively on authentic children's stories offers an inspiring means for language learning, while fostering the development of the thinking skills that are needed for second language learning. Equally, children's realistic fiction has the potential of developing the student's intercultural awareness while cultivating empathy, a

tolerance for diversity, and emotional intelligence. All these are key factors in determining the quality of literature we want to read to children, in order to reach its fullest potential.⁴⁰

Without question, choosing the right book may be the most difficult and most important part of incorporating realistic fiction in the classroom. Appropriate book selection is vital to provide an experience that result in promoting literacy development, which highlights the students' interests and needs, and that, is developmentally appropriate. If not, what the child takes from the book and how he responds to the book will be insufficient or illusory.

When evaluating the quality of children's realistic fiction, it is indispensable that the teachers consider asking themselves the following questions: Are characters true-to-life and show change and growth in regards to their personality throughout the story? Is the reflection of the human condition veracious and avoids stereotyping? Is the plot appealing for children in regards to challenges, fears, hopes, issues? Is the plot inspiring for reflection or does it provide "handy resolutions"? Is the setting real? Is language appropriate for children? These will give educators a parameter to determine the books' validity. If the selection is too easy, the students will feel bored and it will be difficult to prepare enough activities. If the selection is too difficult, students will feel frustrated.⁴¹

At its core, a good realistic fiction book must have believable characters, language and actions suitable to the setting and reflective of the cultural and social class in which they live. In regards to the authenticity of the language used in realistic fiction, it is important to state that authors should keep it real, but being sensitive and responsible in the selection of words to avoid stereotyping. Another important characteristic of quality children's realistic fiction is that it challenges readers to learn about the significance of ethical behavior. Children come up

⁴⁰ AMER, Anwar Ali. (2003). *Teaching EFL/ESL Literature. The Reading Matrix*.
<<http://www.readingmatrix.com/articles/amer/article.pdf>> Access: (April 5, 2014)

⁴¹ BUCHER K. and MANNING M.L. (2014). *Characteristics of Good Realistic Fiction*.
<<http://www.education.com/reference/article/characteristics-good-realistic-fiction/>>
Access: (April 20, 2014)

with their own conclusions after examining the facts, from their personal perspectives using their own moral discernment.⁴²

Children identify with a story when it reflects their experiences and realize that their problems are not unique. In this way, they develop empathy by being put in the place of others and by having the opportunity to see all kinds of lives. They take a glance of the world as a whole, rather than only focusing on their own life.⁴³

Other key characteristics to consider when evaluating potential books are the length and complexity of the story. Simple, easy-to-read stories with repetitive language, rhyme, humor and suspense work best for EFL learners. The level of vocabulary is another aspect to consider. It should let students feel confident in their capacity to understand the story. Illustrations should be varied and high-quality to call student's attention, enable them to understand the story, and develop their visual literacy. Finally, it is important that the teacher chooses a book he/she enjoys, to convince students to be enthusiastic about it too. Stories should offer a visible end result in the form of book-making, dramatization, related songs and rhyme, and making a game.⁴⁴

Children's realistic fiction has become a useful and powerful tool in EFL contexts as an appropriate vehicle for language development and learning because it portrays authentic situations in simple authentic language. It increases second/foreign language learner's pace, effectiveness and enjoyment in reading by using stories that mirror the real world and that deal with current issues. Appropriate selection of this type of literature gives students exposure to new, illustrated vocabulary in context, provides repetition of high-frequency words and phrases that students can learn to manipulate, and the opportunity for free individual expression and critical thinking.

⁴² AMER, Anwar Ali. (2003). *Teaching EFL/ESL Literature. The Reading Matrix*.
<<http://www.readingmatrix.com/articles/amer/article.pdf>> Access: (April 5, 2014)

⁴³ Id.

⁴⁴ Huck, Charlotte S., & Kiefer Z. Barbara. (2001). *Children's Literature in the Elementary School*. United States: McGraw-Hill.

The educational value of children's realistic fiction is tangible and profound. EFL teachers of young children have incorporated this kind of literature in their classes because they comply with the major objectives for foreign language teaching: linguistic, cognitive, psychological, social and cultural. Teachers also use well selected realistic fiction stories because they constitute the starting point and a rich context for developing a wide range of related language and learning activities involving children's personality, imagination and creativity.

CHAPTER IV: INTEGRATION OF CHILDREN'S REALISTIC FICTION IN THE ENGLISH THIRD GRADE CLASS AT COLEGIO TERRANOVA

4.1. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND TECHNIQUES

Three quality children's realistic fiction books were carefully selected considering the student's age, current interests, and core values, as well as the level of English complexity (mainly in regards to vocabulary), language usage (simple, repetitive, short sentences), and objectivity (to avoid stereotyping). These books, in combination with nine thematic realistic fiction lesson plans (dealing with the three themes previously explained on this dissertation: Bullying, Responsibility and Honesty) (See Annex # Page) and applied in thirteen 90 minute-periods of class (separated in two blocks) became the essential useful tool to enhance the teaching/learning process. These tools helped the teachers in their attempt to reach the student's EFL needs, while building their character. This dissertation involves a micro-experimental research project that involved the students from Third Grade 'D' at "Colegio Terranova".

The students from third Grade 'D' (the experimental group) and the students from Third Grade 'C' (the control group) took a pre-test (See Annex # Page) that attempted to assess the students' level of English before the experiment. The results of the pre-tests were analyzed through an objective study of the data and served as a guide along the process of the

experiment, since it contained important information in regards to the students' language strengths and weaknesses. Besides, with the information gathered from the pre-tests, the thematic realistic fiction lesson plans were adapted to serve the purpose of the study and the language objectives. The results of the pre-tests from Third Grade 'C' fulfilled comparison purposes since this last group did not go through the experiment. (Statistical charts with Pre-test results are shown in the following Pre-test Analysis section of this dissertation)

All nine thematic realistic fiction lesson plans were focused on the reading comprehension process, while contributing with favorable moments for reflection and analysis of the themes discussed. These lesson plans offered a lot of comprehensible input by means of well-defined content and language objectives; meaningful and authentic activities that integrated lesson contents with language practice opportunities; opportunities for interaction and discussion; and ample opportunities for clarification of concepts. In this way, children were able to put into practice their communication skills, while reinforcing their listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities. All these also let the teacher use a maximum amount of the target language. The activities were fun and creative enough to produce a risk-free classroom environment where children were not conscious about using English to communicate ideas and feelings. The micro-experiment took a total of twenty hours, divided in thirteen ninety-minute periods of class. Each thematic lesson plan was covered in two consecutive class periods of 45 minutes each, to give continuity to the lesson and to adjust to the school's established class schedule. The micro-experiment started on November 12th, 2014 with the Pre-Test and ended on December 3rd, 2014 with a final project class and with the Post-test. It is noteworthy to mention that due to the flexibility and adaptability (at the time) there was by the school teachers, the experiment was feasible. The micro-experiment took four weeks total.

At the end of the study, it was examined if the mentioned hypotheses were verified and if the incorporation of quality realistic fiction for children in the teaching of English as a foreign language enabled students to improve their language proficiency and to learn to deal with difficult life situations, while promoting core values. The results were evaluated and compared with the control group to find out if the hypotheses were proved or not.

4.2. EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN DESCRIPTION

The project was applied from November 12th to December 3th 2014 at “Colegio Terranova” complying with all school requirements and authorizations. The participants of the project were the students from Third Grade ‘D’ as the experimental group, and the students from Third Grade ‘C’ as the control group. The experimental group had 20 students, and the control group had 23 students.

The validity and reliability of this experimental design derive from nine thematic realistic fiction lesson plans based on three quality children’s realistic fiction books, which were used as the backbone to sustain this dissertation. The purpose of this dissertation is to show that through the incorporation of quality children’s realistic fiction in the EFL classroom, language proficiency is improved; and, to demonstrate that the use of quality realistic fiction can build character in students. The exploration of current issues, such as bullying and values such as, honesty and responsibility were an integral part of these lesson plans. Treating values in the lessons constituted an excellent way of helping children develop their own skills in applying values to their lives, instead of just being passive agents waiting for the adult’s interpretation of them. Through quality realistic fiction, children are better able to learn to develop their own life-skill values, as this sort of stories portray real characters, facing real-life situations that inspire students to discover possibilities, weight up alternatives, and think about consequences that are value-oriented.

The students’ age (eight to nine year olds) and their corresponding developmental stage were considered when choosing the books, in the design of the thematic realistic fiction lesson plans, and in the subsequent activities to procure the desired degree of interest, motivation, and commitment from their part. Since most of the students in Third Grade showed a low level of English in the pre-test (See Annex # 1) some necessary changes, additions and adjustments had to be done along the way in the implementation of the experimental design.

4.3. EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN PROCESS

The experimental design process began with the administration of the English proficiency pre-test to both, Third Grade ‘D’ (the experimental group) and Third Grade ‘C’ (the control group) on November 12th, 2014. (See Annex # 1).

In relation to the EFL proficiency pre-test, it is important to say that when the teacher explained the reasons for the test and when she clearly stated its non-influential aspect in their grades, the children had different reactions, which were an influential factor in the pre-test. Some students from the experimental group still felt anxious about the pre-test not only for the result itself, but as a result of having a ‘new teacher’ in their classroom, while some students from the control group had an ‘I do not care about it’ attitude. These children did not try to answer the questions in the pre-test, they left them in blank. The pre-test was intended to evaluate the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) in order to have a clearer idea of their English quality, and to find out in which of those the students perform better at, and those in which they need assistance and reinforcement. Despite the commented reactions of some children, once the objective of the pre-test was explained, the majority of students began to show more confidence and the classroom environment was relaxed. The pre-test was handed out and the teacher carefully explained section by section. Then, the teacher set a time for further clarification and questions.

The first part of the pre-test involved Listening Comprehension. They had to watch and listen to a realistic fiction story and answer some questions related to it. The exercise was repeated twice and the instruction was kept even after some students’ requests were made to watch it one more time due to the fact that they were not able to answer some questions. The second part of the test consisted of Speaking. Here, students had to answer five questions based on the story they had watch and heard. This specific section was left aside for later because it was a one-to-one activity with the teacher that students could not perform at the time the test was taken place. After the test was over, the teacher called them one by one and asked them the questions. Some students were a little shy at the beginning, but then overcame

this initial reaction and ended up answering in complete sentences. The problem other children encountered was that it was hard for them to recall what happened in the story and they were not able to answer the questions. The rest of the students had difficulty expressing themselves in English although they made a big effort to answer the questions.

The third part of the pre-test included Reading. In this section, students found it hard to understand a short realistic fiction passage (adapted for testing purposes) because of some new vocabulary words. The teacher helped clarifying the meaning of some words, but she also gave them a hint on how to inference words from text, which was the strategy they had to use in this particular section to understand the new vocabulary. Some of them were able to do it, while others tried to use their dictionaries (that were not allowed because of the purpose of the exercise: infer words from text). Finally, the fourth part of the pre-test encompassed Writing. In this section, the children had to choose between one of three options and write about it. The idea here, was to make it creative writing, but since the instructions established the use of eighty words in their writing, some children focused their attention on counting the words, others felt frustrated, and most of them simply found it extremely hard to express themselves through writing or did not understand the motto. They had three options to write about (had to choose only one), which were an 80-word blog post for www.honestylesson.com; their own 80-word honesty oath for www.honestyoaths.com ; and an 80-word mail for www.lyingcanhurt.com describing how a lie can hurt them. The results in this specific section were very poor and affected the overall result of the pre-test, which will be discussed later.

After analyzing the pre-test results more changes and adaptations were made to the thematic realistic fiction lesson plans to accommodate them to the specific needs of students. The results of the Writing section of the Pre-test are taking in the magnitude they deserve since this skill is supposed to be developed as a consequence of the students' ability to express themselves orally, by expanding their vocabulary knowledge.

The thirteen classes that this Experimental Design included were divided in nine thematic realistic lesson plans, three of which dealt with the issue of bullying based on the

book “The Recess Queen” by Alexia O’Neil. The other six dealt with the values of Honesty and Responsibility, based on the books “Jamaica’s Find” by Juanita Havill, and “Strega Nona” by Tomie de Paola, correspondingly. Three classes were left for special projects at the end of each thematic realistic lesson plan and, the last class was left for the post-test application. (See Annex # 1).

4.3.1. Class # 1: November 14th, 2014 (THE RECESS QUEEN: BULLYING)

The children made the ‘new teacher’ feel welcome and the class started very smoothly. They were cooperative and enthusiastic about starting their Language class with an innovative activity. The students were already seated in groups of three or in pairs, which enhanced the logistics for the Ice Breaker activity. They talked with the people in their groups about a favorite book they have read and the reasons why they had liked it. All of them were actively engaged in this group sharing, but it was hard for them to use English. When doing this activity all together as a class, some of them were afraid of speaking in front of everybody, while others were really into it. Despite the simplicity of the warm-up activity (crumple a piece of paper and smooth it), it was very symbolic for them and touched their hearts. When making the connection between the appearance of the piece of paper after being crumpled and smoothed out with the fact that it is hard to take back words, they were able to clearly grasp the concept of ‘victim’ when being bullied. The words bullying, bully and victim were used adequately. They were participative when asked to come in front of the class and write about what they think they could do to repair the crumpled piece of paper. They felt confident as their ideas were recognized and valued by their classmates. During ‘reading time’, students were quiet and paying attention to the story. They enjoyed the book since it was simple-to-read, with lots of rhyming and nice illustrations. But, there was also a lot of interruption because they wanted to know the meaning of some words. An important aspect to mention is that few children felt comfortable when speaking in public about situations that make or have made someone or themselves feel hurt or bad, or about their feelings for Mean Jean (the bully in the book). Most of them were embarrassed or did not feel confident enough to talk in English. The teacher, then, guided them in order to help them speak since what was expected

was for them to express themselves orally to describe and share experiences. Moreover, they had a good previous knowledge of regular and irregular verbs, so that facilitated the classification of these verbs and coming up with the rule. They did have some trouble with rhyming words and the teacher dedicated more time to this activity as she considered it an important step in the development of their oral expression. (See Annex # 1 for lesson plan # 1).

OBSERVATION FORM							
OBSERVER: External Observer (Classroom Teacher)				DATE: November 14th, 2014			
CLASS TOPIC: Bullying				BOOK: The Recess Queen			
OBJECTIVES:							
1. Define and give examples of bullying, bully and bullied.							
2. Describe how bullying behavior can make people feel and how it affects the community.							
3. Describe how being kind and helping others benefits everybody.							
GENERAL ACTIVITIES							
ACTIVITY	LEVELS OF					Concept Grasp	
	Participation	Enthusiasm	Cooperation	Comfort in English Communication			
Ice Breaker	S	S	A	B	E		
Warm-Up Activity	E	E	E	B	E		
Reading and Response Activities	S	E	S	B	E		
Scale: E - Excelent, S - Satisfactory, A - Average, B - Below Expectation							
EFL ACTIVITIES							
FOCI							
Vocabulary	Grammatical Structure	Phonemic Awareness	Cultural Focus	Reading	Writing	Listening	Speaking
E	E	A	NA	S	B	S	S
Scale: E - Excelent, S - Satisfactory, A - Average, B - Below Expectation, NA - Not Applicable							

4.3.2. Class # 2: November 17th, 2014 (THE RECESS QUEEN: BULLYING)

In the second class, the children were more participative and relaxed when sharing their personal ideas. The warm-up activity (comprehensible input) served as a great opportunity for them to demonstrate what they understood from the story and to express themselves using complete sentence structures. Some children asked “How do you say such and such in English?”, so that showed their interest and effort to communicate in the target language. They also enjoyed watching the video about the difference between Tattling vs. Telling and were able to understand the concept. Besides, it was interesting to see how well they remembered the past tense of regular and irregular verbs as they corrected themselves or their classmates while talking aloud. The teacher also corrected the students’ sentences by using the paraphrasing technique to avoid future “fossilization” (improper retention of certain rules or grammatical structures that occur in students while learning a second language) of

incorrect sentence patterns. During the phonemic awareness activity they showed difficulty breaking up words to look for vowel teams. What children loved most about this lesson was when they had to draw their favorite character from the story “The Recess Queen” and describe it from the “inside” and the “outside” (See Annex # 2). They put a lot of effort in their pictures, thinking thoroughly about how the characters looked like, in order to draw them with lots of details. They were mainly focused on the artistic aspect of the activity and paid less attention to the written description. Although they did a wonderful job, some of them did not want to share their drawings with the rest of the class because they did not feel confident enough with their written descriptions, and that was respected. Then, some extra time was destined to aid children in their writing and to avoid frustration. The teacher asked them questions about their pictures to help them clarify details and to organize their thoughts better. They were happy to be able to cope with this difficulty and ended up letting the teacher display their work afterwards. During the Wrap-up activity they enjoyed finding out how the words used to describe two different characters were repeated (See Annex # 3 for lesson plan # 2).

OBSERVATION FORM							
OBSERVER: External Observer (Classroom Teacher)				DATE: November 17th, 2014			
CLASS TOPIC: Bullying				BOOK: The Recess Queen			
OBJECTIVES:							
1. Recall and sequence the events in a story.							
2. Describe characters in a story (their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.							
3. Find connections between their personal lives and the ones from characters in the stories.							
4. Understand what a bully is and what to say to a bully.							
5. Explore creative ways of solving problems.							
GENERAL ACTIVITIES							
ACTIVITY	LEVELS OF						
	Participation	Enthusiasm	Cooperation	Comfort in English Communication	Concept Grasp		
Warm-Up Activity	S	S	S	A	S		
Reading and Response Activities	E	E	S	A	E		
Wrap-Up Activity	E	E	E	S	E		
Scale: E - Excelent, S - Satisfactory, A - Average, B - Below Expectation							
EFL ACTIVITIES							
FOCI							
Vocabulary	Grammatical Structure	Phonemic Awareness	Cultural Focus	Reading	Writing	Listening	Speaking
A	S	A	NA	E	B	S	A
Scale: E - Excelent, S - Satisfactory, A - Average, B - Below Expectation, NA - Not Applicable							

4.3.3. Class # 3: November 19th, 2014 (THE RECESS QUEEN: BULLYING)

Children have a clear idea of the concepts of bullying, bullied and victim by now, and when the teacher told them that the theme for the class was still dealing with bullying, they did not show much enthusiasm. In fact, they said “We know bullying...no more!” The teacher, then, had to find a way to revive the childrens’ curiosity and she decided to start with the EFL learning foci of this lesson as an opener, instead of immersing it in the lesson as planned. The teacher divided the class into two teams, and the children were delighted to play the game of dragging scrambled words to make a sentence (with word cards pasted on the whiteboard). They also broke vocabulary words into syllables as a transition activity, and were good at it. This ‘twist’ in the schedule, set the tune for the upcoming activities. Since more time was spent on the previous activity, the teacher skipped the ‘discussion starters’ that were part of the lesson, and put the video “Be an Upstander” for the students to watch. They liked it a lot as it offered them a different perspective, something new in regards to the issue of bullying. They were really into the activity of analyzing, applying, and evaluating what they saw and in trying to put it into practice in their school and in their own lives. This eagerness to comment ideas and opinions, made it really difficult for them to state their points of view coherently in English. The teacher, then, made them ventilate their thoughts without being strict in the use of English. In this way, they felt less anxious and were better able to manifest and organize what they wanted to communicate in the target language at the end. When doing the wrap-up activity, the teacher realized the children were tired and decided to let them do the writing activity about “Upstanders” (See Annex 4A) and “anonymous bullying” as homework to be shared with the class the next day. (See Annex # 4 for lesson plan # 3). Instead of the planned wrap-up, the teacher brought up the topic of finding differences between bullies in different cultures. The children were able to think of examples and contrast the behavior of mean girls in their school with those in movies.

OBSERVATION FORM							
OBSERVER: External Observer (Classroom Teacher)				DATE: November 19th, 2014			
CLASS TOPIC: Bullying				BOOK: The Recess Queen			
OBJECTIVES:							
1. Learn and explore some actions to stand up to bullying. 2. Find their own solutions when faced with challenging situations. 3. Effectively engage in collaborative discussions, based on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly. 4. Integrate acquired knowledge into real-life situations for the prevention of bullying by reflecting upon and stating their opinion.							
GENERAL ACTIVITIES							
ACTIVITY	LEVELS OF					Concept Grasp	
	Participation	Enthusiasm	Cooperation	Comfort in English Communication			
Warm-Up Activity	S	A	S	A	E		
Reading and Response Activities	E	E	S	A	E		
Wrap-Up Activity	E	E	E	A	E		
Scale: E - Excelent, S - Satisfactory, A - Average, B - Below Expectation							
EFL ACTIVITIES							
FOCI							
Vocabulary	Grammatical Structure	Phonemic Awareness	Cultural Focus	Reading	Writing	Listening	Speaking
E	E	S	E	E	A	S	S
Scale: E - Excelent, S - Satisfactory, A - Average, B - Below Expectation, NA - Not Applicable							

4.3.4. Class # 4- Class # 5: November 21st and November 24th, 2014 (BULLYING/ FINAL PROJECT)

As a closing activity for these three ninety-minute period thematic realistic lesson plans, the teacher wanted the children to make their own “version” of The Recess Queen through a theatrical representation. The teacher was going to provide the students with the dialogue, but instead she decided to let them create their own, as an incentive for creative writing. When told about it, the children felt kind of disappointed because, as they said “No...no sabemos como hacer esto.” Although through the teacher’s eyes this was going to be motivating and a great tool for accomplishing the students’ language and literacy development, the students did not feel comfortable with that kind of exercises as they have been used to more structured activities. Because of this, the teacher proposed students to work cooperatively and offered them all her help. She divided the class into five groups. Each group was responsible for deciding who was going to represent each character, and for preparing the initial dialogues. After revising their first attempt, the students realized they had to make a second draft to improve the quality of their writing (See Annex 5A for students’ creative dialogues/Theatrical Representation). In spite of the fact that initially they were not interested in doing this kind of activity, and considering the previous trouble they encountered

when writing, the children worked very hard to come up with good dialogues for the play. They felt proud of themselves and had a sense of accomplishment. It is important to mention that although time-consuming and at times frustrating, this activity became like the ‘seed’ that let the students acknowledge their weaknesses, grow into them, and bring out their strengths. Even though the class was planned to be done only in one period, the reality was that because of the mentioned adaptations, the children needed more time to structure and practice their play. The play ended up being a success that both, teachers and students enjoyed. (See Annex # 5).

4.3.4. Class # 6: November 25th, 2014 (JAMAICA’S FIND: HONESTY)

Children love the “M&M Ice Breaker activity”. They were able to get to know their friends better, in regards to their choices and interests. The fact of starting the class with a new topic (Honesty) made them feel happy and raised their expectations. As a warm-up activity, children were given different examples in order for them to find out the meaning of honesty. They were eager to give their own definitions, and it was noticed that more and more children were speaking aloud even if their sentence structure was not perfect. It seemed that they were losing their ‘fear’ to talk in public and, also their consciousness about the use of the target language. Children liked the story as they identified with the character and with the problem depicted in the book, but they did not enjoyed that much when they had to infer information from the characters in the story from their facial expressions. Therefore, they had difficulty writing sentences about the characters. It was also very interesting to see that they were able to make connections between the power of telling the truth to avoid being a bystander when bullying, for example. In regards to grammar, they showed some difficulty when editing the sentence, not because they did not know how to do it, but because they did not pay the deserved attention to the errors, which is precisely what happened in their own writing. They had no problem when substituting initial sounds in the vocabulary words, but only half of the class was able to come up with the meaning of the new words by inferring them from the text. The teacher provided the kids with some examples of words from the book and guided them to find their meaning by looking for the words in the context. Children

were motivated when being in small groups and reflecting and trying to find values from de story. They took pleasure in listening to the song about honesty and even dance to its rhythm. (See Annex # 6 for lesson plan # 4).

OBSERVATION FORM							
OBSERVER: External Observer (Classroom Teacher)				DATE: November 25th, 2014			
CLASS TOPIC: Honesty				BOOK: Jamaica's Find			
OBJECTIVES:							
1. Define what "honesty" and "dishonesty" are.							
2. List qualities of someone honest and someone dishonest.							
3. Relate to stories of honest people.							
GENERAL ACTIVITIES							
ACTIVITY	LEVELS OF						
	Participation	Enthusiasm	Cooperation	Comfort in English Communication	Concept Grasp		
Ice Breaker	E	E	E	A	E		
Warm-Up Activity	E	E	E	S	E		
Reading and Response Activities	E	E	S	S	E		
Wrap-Up Activity	E	E	E	NA	E		
Scale: E - Excelent, S - Satisfactory, A - Average, B - Below Expectation, NA - Not Applicable							
EFL ACTIVITIES							
FOCI							
Vocabulary	Grammatical Structure	Phonemic Awareness	Cultural Focus	Reading	Writing	Listening	Speaking
A	A	S	NA	S	B	S	E
Scale: E - Excelent, S - Satisfactory, A - Average, B - Below Expectation, NA - Not Applicable							

4.3.5. Class # 7: November 26th, 2014 (JAMAICA'S FIND: HONESTY)

Children actively participated when revisiting the book "Jamaica's Find" and were able to find descriptive words in the text and to write sentences with the new words found. In regards to the "Phonemic Awareness Activity" it is necessary to say that it was something new for them, so they had trouble when breaking words to find blends. They liked working on their "Lost & Found Posters" as their pets are a special belonging for them. The teacher did not provide pictures of animals for them to choose; instead they made the posters about their pets. If it happened they did not have one, they had the option of making the poster about anything they had actually lost or to use their imagination and be creative. They loved talking about African-Americans, until the class was interrupted by an abrupt racist comment from one of the students. This incident could not be ignored and the teacher spent the necessary amount of time making sure that this kind of behavior was not going to be repeated, by reflecting upon it. The teacher made a consciouss effort to deviate the students' attention to what was said, rather than to who said it. After this event, the children felt a little tense and it

was hard for them to concentrate. Yet, the racist comment offered a great opportunity for the teacher to shift the topic back to its original plan: cultural differences. The teacher used the “What Should You Do” game (that was part of the lesson) as a distractor and that helped the students get focused again, and understand the importance of getting ownership of our own behavior. When doing the Journal Writing activity, some children had a better attitude since they felt more convinced about their abilities in this area. But, others still found it very hard to put their thoughts into words so they did not work, got bored and began to misbehave. These students were given the option of writing three sentences with the new vocabulary words that was a previous activity (done as a whole group), but still they showed no desire to work. The teacher had trouble managing this because she was engaged in assisting the kids that were writing, instead of solving the classroom disruption. This lesson had to go through some adaptations in order to better meet students’ needs and due to external factors. For this reason the wrap-activity could not be done. (See Annex # 7 for lesson plan # 5).

OBSERVATION FORM							
OBSERVER: External Observer (Classroom Teacher)				DATE: November 26th, 2014			
CLASS TOPIC: Honesty				BOOK: Jamaica's Find			
OBJECTIVES:							
1. Acknowledge that being honest is not only what you say and act towards others, but also understanding what is being honest with oneself.							
2. Discover what conscience is, how it helps us make good choices and gain self-control.							
3. Identify that honesty is the best policy at the end.							
GENERAL ACTIVITIES							
ACTIVITY	LEVELS OF					Concept Grasp	
	Participation	Enthusiasm	Cooperation	Comfort in English Communication			
Warm-Up Activity	E	E	E	S	E		
Reading and Response Activities	S	S	S	S	S		
Wrap-Up Activity	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA		
Scale: E - Excelent, S - Satisfactory, A - Average, B - Below Expectation, NA - Not Applicable							
EFL ACTIVITIES							
FOCI							
Vocabulary	Grammatical Structure	Phonemic Awareness	Cultural Focus	Reading	Writing	Listening	Speaking
S	A	B	E	S	S	S	S
Scale: E - Excelent, S - Satisfactory, A - Average, B - Below Expectation, NA - Not Applicable							

4.3.6. Class # 8: November 27th, 2014 (JAMAICA’S FIND: HONESTY)

The children kept working on their “Lost & Found posters” (See Annex # 8). They took a lot of time to decorate the posters and make them look beautiful, instead of concentrating their attention in the goal of the activity which was to write using descriptive

words. Because of this, the teacher had to interrupt the activity and talked about how to prioritize things. Children were attentive to the teacher's advice; they had a positive response and started to write in their posters. This warm-up activity is the one that the students have found the most enjoyable by now. They had a great time watching their friend getting tangled in a web of yarn and were able to grasp the underlying purpose of the activity. While re-reading "Jamaica's Find", they went through the vocabulary words that were in the book, and as a group (on the whiteboard), they started the search for the best definition of each word using an inferencing graphic organizer (See Annex # 9). It was interesting to observe that most of the children had more facility to elucidate the words from the text. This group of students is particularly fond of acting. They were delighted to know that they had to role-play different situations. They were also pleased to work in groups and discuss ideas and opinions. Certainly, small grouping is something the majority of children prefer because they felt much more comfortable talking in the target language in this way, than in front of the whole class. The reflective writing exercise was very personal and they appreciated the fact of keeping it as a reminder of always doing the right thing for themselves. The class ended with the teacher's explanation of the honesty pledges they will do as a final project. (See Annex # 10 for lesson plan # 6).

OBSERVATION FORM							
OBSERVER: External Observer (Classroom Teacher)				DATE: November 27th, 2014			
CLASS TOPIC: Honesty				BOOK: Jamaica's Find			
OBJECTIVES:							
1. List ways they can be honest at home and at school.							
2. Identify ways to tell whether or not something is the right thing to do.							
3. Use their experience and acquired knowledge to create useful tools to promote and encourage honesty in the community.							
GENERAL ACTIVITIES							
ACTIVITY	LEVELS OF						
	Participation	Enthusiasm	Cooperation	Comfort in English Communication	Concept Grasp		
Warm-Up Activity	E	E	E	S	S		
Reading and Response Activities	E	E	E	S			
Scale: E - Excelent, S - Satisfactory, A - Average, B - Below Expectation							
EFL ACTIVITIES							
FOCI							
Vocabulary	Grammatical Structure	Phonemic Awareness	Cultural Focus	Reading	Writing	Listening	Speaking
S	S	A	NA	E	S	S	E
Scale: E - Excelent, S - Satisfactory, A - Average, B - Below Expectation, NA - Not Applicable							

4.3.7. Class # 9: November 27th, 2014 (HONESTY/FINAL PROJECT)

This last project could be done on the same day as the last thematic realistic fiction lesson about honesty (class # 8), since the physical education teacher offered her class time because she was not going to be at the school that day. Both students and teacher were very excited with this work. The teacher explained the activity with more detail. She provided them with clear instructions and handy tips to guide them with their writing. (See Annex # 11), and told them that their pledges will be bonded together as a book to share with the other third graders. This made the students feel extra motivated and they showed eagerness to do their best. They were really concentrated in their writing and the classroom environment was relaxed. It is important to mention that for the first time throughout this time, all the children had a positive attitude when working in this kind of activity and were engaged in it. The guidelines provided definitely helped them because they knew what was expected. At a certain point, the students got tired and lost concentration. Therefore, the teacher let them decorate their pledges instead. After some time, they went back to the written work and finished their honesty pledges (See Annex 12A). It was a long activity that required close attention, but at the end the students felt proud of their work. (See Annex # 12).

4.3.8. Class # 10: November 28th, 2014 (STREGA NONA: RESPONSIBILITY)

This tenth class started with an entertaining Ice Breaker activity, which made the children speak in English freely as they were completely interested in participating in the game. They found it easy to make new words from a root by adding a suffix, but were kind of bored and felt like “babies” (as they said) when doing the sound substitution activity with rhyming words because they have been exposed to a more “by the rule” approach to language, instead of just playing with it. Then, a map of Europe was displayed and the children were wondering what it was all about. The teacher has come to realize that the surprise factor is something beneficial with this particular group of students. She mentioned Italy and pointed to it in the map, and asked them what they knew about this country. They said words like “pasta”, “pizza”, “it looks like a boot”. Then, the teacher told them about the connection between Italy and “Strega Nona” (the book they were about to read). The kids seemed to be

enjoying the story and, most of all they loved making predictions about what was going to happen. While reading, the students detected new words, which were put in a “cooking pot”. The teacher made sentences with them (an adaptation made to keep working on inferring words from text) to guide them in “decoding” the correct meaning. They have not got bored working as much as they have on this, instead they felt comfortable. They liked the fact of proving their predictions and changing them throughout the reading time (See Annex # 13). The teacher decided not to give them a prediction worksheet, instead students made their own prediction charts. This was done to help students improve the quality and presentation of their work. Because they have demonstrated a great capacity to organize themselves and to take turns, the whole group discussion prepared for this lesson plan, which consisted of recording character’s feelings, was changed for group discussions. The teacher monitored their arguments by asking follow-up questions when needed. They seemed more confident and relaxed when talking in English as they made a big effort to don’t switch to Spanish even when they did not know how to say a word. Instead they asked their friends “How do you say ____ in English?” It is also important to mention that they corrected the grammatical errors in their sentences among themselves. They seemed comfortable with this. (See Annex # 14 for lesson plan # 7).

OBSERVATION FORM							
OBSERVER: External Observer (Classroom Teacher)				DATE: November 28th, 2014			
CLASS TOPIC: Responsibility				BOOK: Strega Nona			
OBJECTIVES:							
1. Use their prior knowledge to make predictions.							
2. Refine predictions as they read to understand the story.							
3. Identify character emotions and how their feelings change throughout a story.							
4. Relate characters' emotions to their personal lives in order to begin to understand what is to be responsible.							
GENERAL ACTIVITIES							
ACTIVITY	LEVELS OF						
	Participation	Enthusiasm	Cooperation	Comfort in English Communication	Concept Grasp		
Ice Breaker	E	E	E	S	E		
Warm-Up Activity	E	E	E	S	E		
Reading and Response Activities	E	E	E	S	E		
Scale: E - Excelent, S - Satisfactory, A - Average, B - Below Expectation							
EFL ACTIVITIES							
FOCI							
Vocabulary	Grammatical Structure	Phonemic Awareness	Cultural Focus	Reading	Writing	Listening	Speaking
S	E	S	E	E	NA	E	E
Scale: E - Excelent, S - Satisfactory, A - Average, B - Below Expectation, NA - Not Applicable							

4.3.9. Class # 11: December 1st, 2014 (STREGA NONA: RESPONSIBILITY)

The students welcomed the teacher and were very excited to keep talking about Big Anthony from the story Strega Nona. This became the ideal scenario to talk deeply and in detail about what is to be responsible, since Anthony's irresponsibility was perfectly portrayed with vivid illustrations and palpable examples; while introducing the new and important vocabulary words (reliable, accountable, self-control). Another activity to help them develop their ability to infer words from text was added during this lesson. The teacher put objects in a bag and gave students five clues about the object. They enjoyed doing that and it is noticeable they are learning new ways to find the meaning of new words. The phonemic awareness activities worked well as they were able to substitute initial sounds and words. The students loved having the opportunity to compare themselves to Big Anthony's experience and were delighted to express their feelings in relation to good or bad choices they have made. The idea of going through a situation similar to a character from a book helped them a lot to open up their hearts and to explore the concept of responsibility. When doing the song activity, they were able to clearly identify the words or phrases that best describe the word responsibility. By this time, the students were extremely excited with the theme and they were very loud. For this reason, the whole group activity did not work as planned. It was hard for them to listen to each other. The teacher, then, decided to make the students do the Reading Response Journals to help them calm down, as they wrote their own personal reflections about a time they have shown or not shown responsibility. Some of them were concentrated on this activity, but others were still distracted and found it hard to do what was said. The bell rang and they just ran out to recess...(See Annex # 15 for lesson plan # 8).

OBSERVATION FORM							
OBSERVER: External Observer (Classroom Teacher)				DATE: December 1st, 2014			
CLASS TOPIC: Responsibility				BOOK: Strega Nona			
OBJECTIVES:							
1. Understand what it means to be responsible by sharing personal experiences. 2. Discover the importance of making good choices in order to show responsibility. 3. Explore ways to follow through on their commitments to take responsibility for their own actions.							
GENERAL ACTIVITIES							
ACTIVITY	LEVELS OF						
	Participation	Enthusiasm	Cooperation	Comfort in English Communication	Concept Grasp		
Warm-Up Activity	E	E	E	E	E		
Reading and Response Activities	E	E	B	S	E		
Scale: E - Excellent, S - Satisfactory, A - Average, B - Below Expectation							
EFL ACTIVITIES							
FOCI							
Vocabulary	Grammatical Structure	Phonemic Awareness	Cultural Focus	Reading	Writing	Listening	Speaking
E	E	S	E	S	A	E	E
Scale: E - Excellent, S - Satisfactory, A - Average, B - Below Expectation, NA - Not Applicable							

4.3.10. Class # 12: December 2nd, 2014 (STREGA NONA: RESPONSIBILITY)

Since the last class the students did not take turns to read the story, part of this class was destined to let them read individually, which helped the teacher observe if they were able to read high frequency words with automaticity. Some students read with fluency, while others demonstrated some difficulty, so the teacher just repeated the high frequency word in the correct form. When doing the Discussion Starters, children actively participated with examples of how to be responsible in school, at home, with themselves, with their friends, with the world and with the environment. The teacher recorded their responses on a chart made on the whiteboard. Although the idea was to keep the conversation away from the issue of “chores”, there was a general tendency to name chores, especially when saying things they had to do at home. It was also hard for them to differentiate between being responsible with the world and with the environment. So, the teacher had to guide them a little for them to come up with examples that were more related with the world and not only with the environment. They did not have clear criteria of how to handle irresponsible people and were kind of vague with their answers. The teacher, then, had to provide them with some specific irresponsible situations, so they could determine the consequences of those bad choices. This helped them and the teacher was able to move on to the introduction of the six attributes of responsible

people (See Annex # 16), and to provide examples for each one of them. These examples were turned into role-playing situations that the kids had to perform. They worked cooperatively in pairs during this activity and were good at it. The rest of the class had to comment on the role-plays, but the teacher decided to change it and instead she motivated them to identify the responsible and the irresponsible behaviors observed. The teacher decided to skip the Reflective writing because they took longer with the role-playing which served the same purpose that was to find out responsible or irresponsible behaviors for each attribute. The class ended with the Responsibility Chart which was the students' compromise to be responsible in different settings. (See Annex # 17 for lesson plan # 9).

OBSERVATION FORM							
OBSERVER: External Observer (Classroom Teacher)				DATE: December 2nd, 2014			
CLASS TOPIC: Responsibility				BOOK: Strega Nona			
OBJECTIVES:							
1. Explore ways to show how to be responsible in different settings and/or surroundings.							
2. Understand the attributes of a responsible person.							
3. Use their experience and acquired knowledge to create useful tools to promote and encourage responsibility in the community.							
GENERAL ACTIVITIES							
ACTIVITY	LEVELS OF					Concept Grasp	
	Participation	Enthusiasm	Cooperation	Comfort in English Communication			
Warm-Up Activity	E	E	E	S	S		
Reading and Response Activities	E	E	E	S	E		
Wrap-Up Activity	E	E	E	E	E		
Scale: E - Excelent, S - Satisfactory, A - Average, B - Below Expectation							
EFL ACTIVITIES							
FOCI							
Vocabulary	Grammatical Structure	Phonemic Awareness	Cultural Focus	Reading	Writing	Listening	Speaking
A	A	NA	S	S	S	S	S
Scale: E - Excelent, S - Satisfactory, A - Average, B - Below Expectation, NA - Not Applicable							

4.3.11. Class # 13: December 3rd, 2014 (RESPONSIBILITY: FINAL PROJECT)

Students were motivated with this activity because they had to pretend and that constituted an excellent way to help them use their creativity and thinking skills. They had to make a handbook for someone from outer space that comes to school on Earth and needs direction on how to be a responsible student. The teacher gave them the same clear instructions and tips on how to write (See Annex # 11), which was previously proved to work well. The students have demonstrated (throughout these thematic lesson plans) an increasing positive attitude towards writing, which has been reflected on the quality and improvement of

their final work. They got really into their work and had the initiative to use dictionaries when they did not know how to say or write a word; they asked for the teacher's help when they did not know how to structure a sentence; and, they made a first draft and a second draft with fewer errors. All these prove that they were interested in making a good job. It is important to mention that the teacher was happy for the quality of their work, but most of all for their attitude towards the activity. (See Annex # 18).

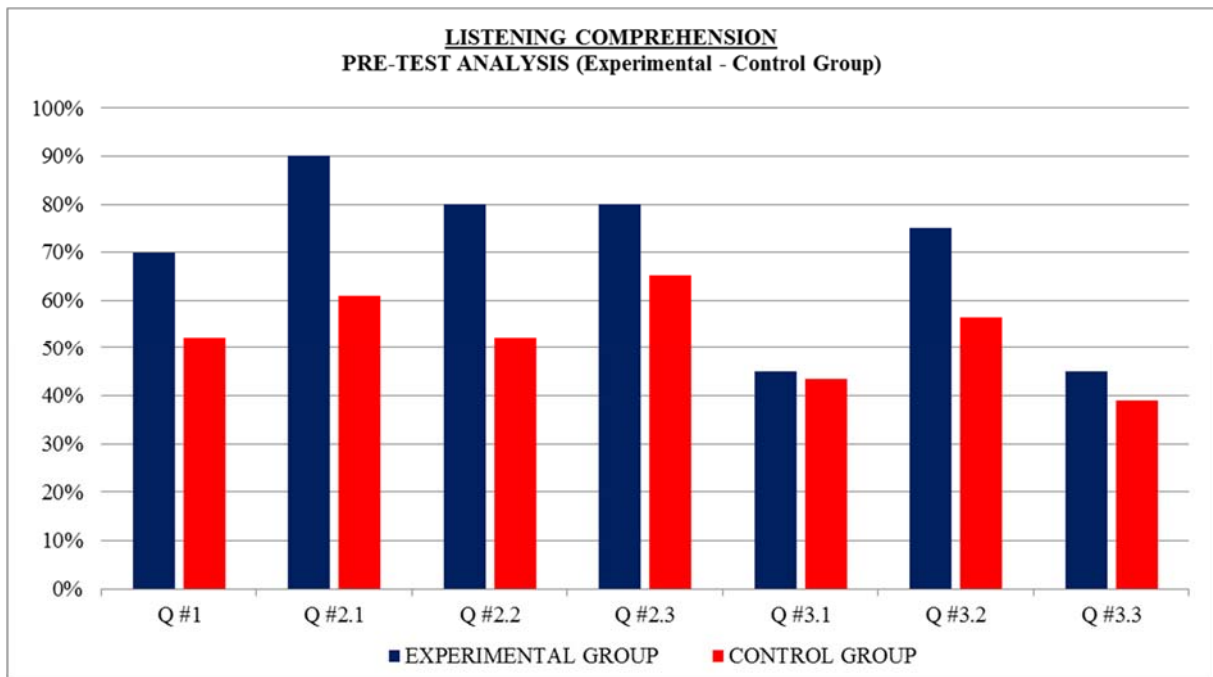
4.4. RESULTS ANALYSIS

The result analysis of the application of “realistic fiction for children in the EFL classroom” proposal started with the Pre-test results for both the experimental group and the control group.

4.4.1. PRE-TEST ANALYSIS (EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUP)

The first part of the Pre-test involved Listening, subdivided into three categories with seven questions in total. Chart 1 shows the results obtained by the experimental and control group respectively. The horizontal axis shows the numbers of the questions, and the vertical axis shows the percentage of correct answers in each question. The results in questions 1-2.1-2.2-2.3-3.2 and 3.3 are higher in the experimental group than in the control group, which means that the students from Third Grade ‘D’ were better at recalling events from the story. But, in questions 3.1 and 3.3, the students from both groups, demonstrated similar difficulty when asked to inference the meaning of determined words from text. For this reason, adaptations in the realistic fiction thematic lesson plans were made to help students (from the experimental group) use their prior knowledge and textual clues to make inferences. Skills like inferencing to determine the meaning of new words, and inferring words from photo prompts were a priority. Exercises like wordless books to predict words in a story, placing objects in a bag and giving students five clues about the object, and inferencing graphic organizers were used (See Annex # 10)

Chart 1. Pre-Test Results LISTENING

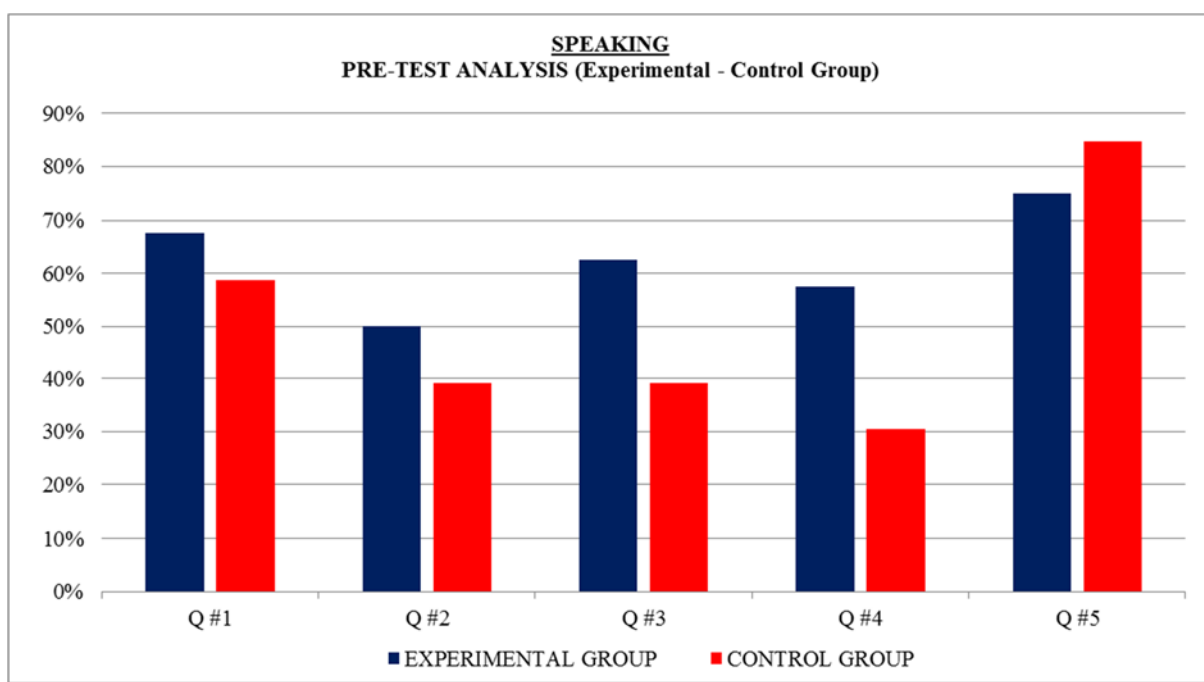


The second part of the Pre-Test consisted of Speaking. This section was done as a one-to-one activity, so each student was called by the teacher and asked the five different questions that were based on the same story used for the Listening Comprehension. Although the children felt nervous and were anxious because they did not know the teacher, they all participated and made an effort to answer the questions and to recall the events from the story. As they talked, most of them started to feel more relaxed, while others still remained shy and had trouble communicating their ideas in English.

Regarding the five questions of the Speaking part, chart 2 shows that the students from the experimental group had higher results in questions 1-2-3-4, and that the control group only had a better performance on question 5. This means that the students from Third Grade ‘D’ were more confident in their oral language skills and in providing enough information from the story to answer the questions. Another aspect to consider is that perhaps they felt more comfortable with the teacher than the subjects from Third Grade ‘C’. For this reason, and because the main goal of this dissertation is to develop and improve the quality of oral language production in students, special attention was given to the speaking area in the

thematic lesson plans and exercises like role-playing, whole group activities, and group discussions were designed to help the students develop their self-confidence, to express their feelings and ideas, and to feel less anxious when talking in public in the target language.

Chart 2. Pre-Test Results SPEAKING

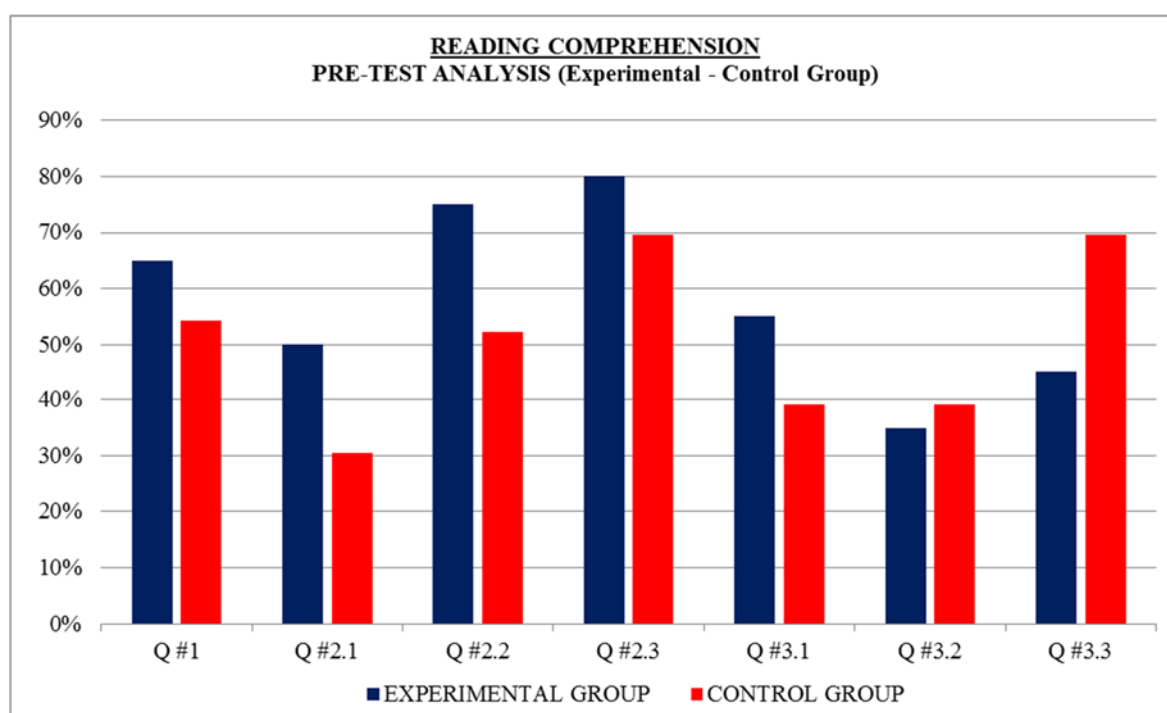


The third part of the Pre-test involved Reading. In this area, specifically, students had trouble with the vocabulary words they found in the passage they had to read. Again, they had to infer words from text, but not all of them were familiarized with context clues. It was hard for them to decode the meaning of the words, so they felt frustrated and just guessed the answer without thinking or reflecting upon it. The teacher suggested reading the passage twice, for them to understand it better, and to avoid constant interruption when asking for the meaning of words. Even though the students encountered this problem, they were able to understand the main idea of the reading.

Regarding this part of the test, chart 3 shows the results obtained by the experimental and the control group. The horizontal axis presents the number of the question proposed by the Reading Exercise and the vertical axis shows the percentage of correct answers in each

question. As we can see, the results in questions 1-2.1-2.2 and 2.3 are higher in the experimental group than in the control group. This means that the students from third grade 'D' were better at recalling facts from the passage than the subjects from third grade 'C'. The percentage in question 3.1 is higher in the experimental group, but the percentage in question 3.3 is much higher in the control group, and the percentage in question 3.2 (although higher in the control group), is low in both groups. The disparity in the results evidently shows that there is no consistency between the students' knowledge and their performance, as they guessed the answers instead of inferring the meaning of words from text.

Chart 3. Pre-Test Results READING

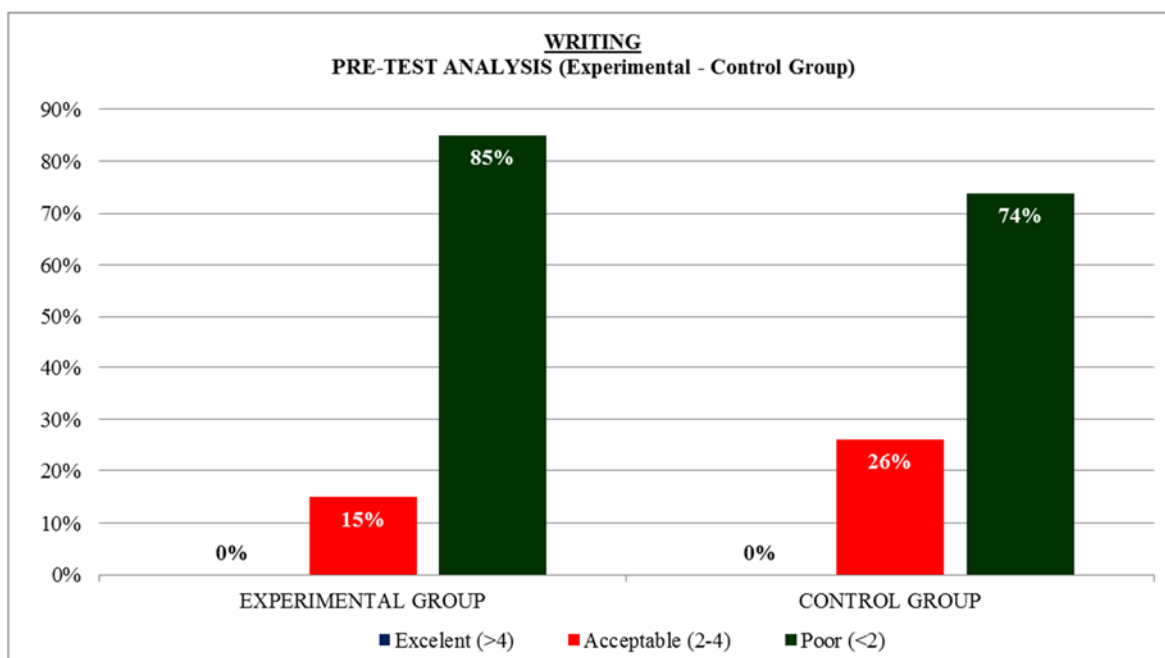


The fourth part of the Pre-test consisted of Writing. Both, the students from the experimental group and the ones from the control group had difficulty understanding the writing prompts since they got confused with the e-mail addresses provided (See Annex #1). They also found it very hard to write a paragraph with connected ideas, instead they just wrote sentences. Moreover they were focused on counting the number of words suggested for their writing, instead of working on the quality of their writing. There was no main idea; the sentences were not related to the topic suggested; there were lots of mistakes in regards to

spelling, subject-verb agreement, word order, verb tense, capitalization, and punctuation; they had trouble manifesting their ideas through writing. Due to the fact that all the students struggled a lot when writing, all these mistakes were not considered; instead what was qualified was the ability to convey their ideas through writing.

Regarding the writing part of the Pre-test, chart 4 shows that both groups had problems when writing a well-structured paragraph. The percentage under the ACCEPTABLE category in both groups was very low. No students fell under the EXCELLENT category, while the majority of students in both groups were categorized under the POOR column. For this reason, tips on how to write a paragraph were given to students by helping them identify the main idea and supporting details. They also had the opportunity to write for different purposes: stating opinions and ideas, reflecting upon issues, and doing descriptions.

Chart 4. Pre-Test Results WRITING

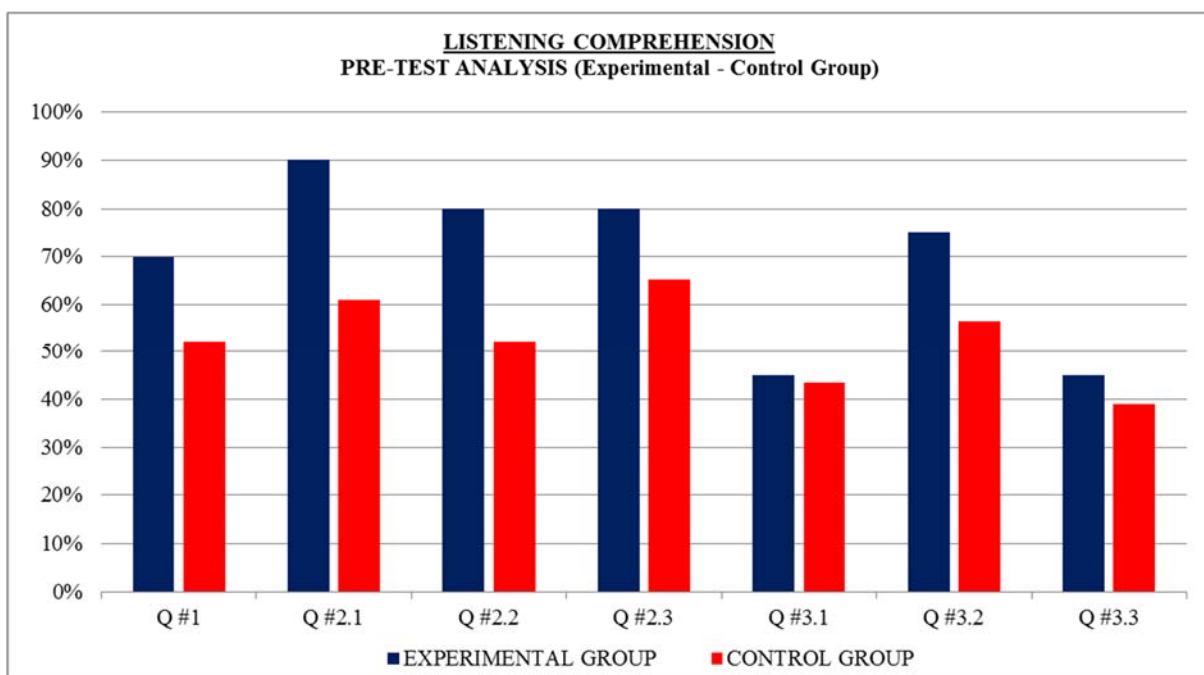


4.4.2. POST-TEST ANALYSIS (EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUP)

On a general basis, the experimental group had a better result on all areas. Nevertheless, the results of the Pre-test show that the experimental and the control groups are not homogeneous in regards to listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. This disparity calls for careful comparative analysis of the data between the Pre-test and the Post-test. Instead of comparing the absolute percentage of correct answers obtained in each section and question by each classroom, the percentages of improvement in each section and question will be compared.

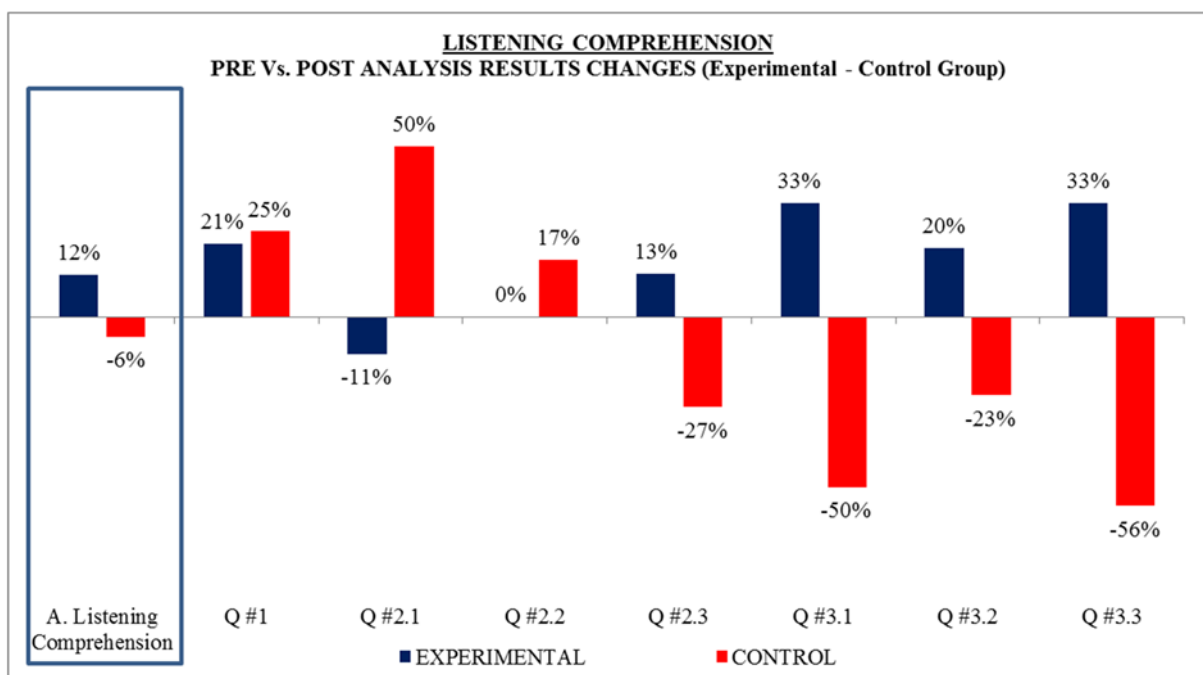
The Post-test application was done during class # 13 on December 3rd, 2014, under exactly the same conditions as the Pre-test. The first part of the Post-test involved Listening and Chart 5 shows the results obtained by the experimental and the control group correspondingly. The horizontal axis presents the number of the question and the vertical axis shows the percentage of correct answers in each question.

Chart 5. Post-Test Results LISTENING



As we can notice, the Post-test results show that the students from the experimental group had a better performance, in general terms, in the Listening section of the Post-test, compared to the results obtained in their Pre-test. Nevertheless, as was noted before, the markedly different skill levels on each classroom that were evidenced during the Pre-test phase, require analyzing percentages of improvement rather than absolute percentages of performance. For this purpose, a comparative chart is provided to illustrate the overall percentage of improvement in the Listening area between the experimental and the control groups. The experimental group improved their listening skills by 12%, while the control group shows a demotion of 6% in this area. This evidences that in comparison with the control group, the students from the experimental group improved their listening skills to a greater degree by being exposed to activities where they had to listen with a purpose, and where they had to think of actions and ideas.

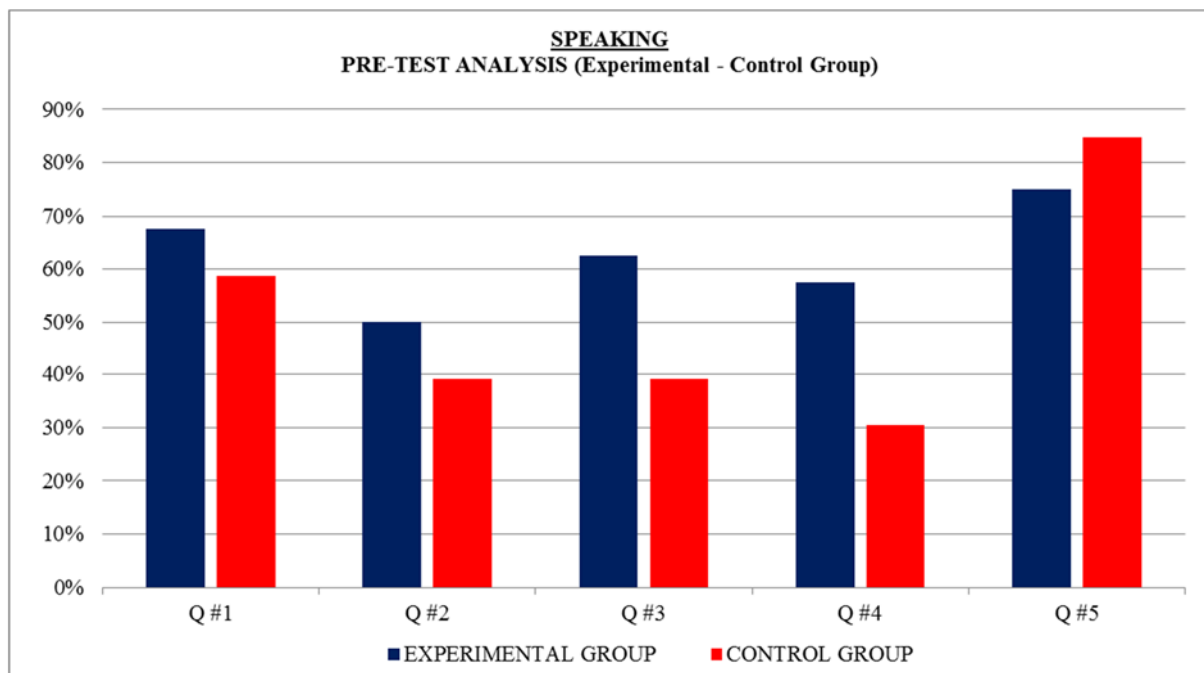
Albeit of this evidence, the students in the experimental group did not improve their performance in all questions on a larger scale than those in the control group. As a matter of fact, the students in the control group showed larger performance improvements on questions 2.1 and 2.2. One feasible explanation for the diminished performance of the students in the experimental group may come from a more empathic approach towards weaker children. Molly Lou Melon, the girl from the story *Stand Tall Molly Lou Melon* (watched when doing the test) is a short and not very good looking girl that was bullied. All through the different thematic realistic fiction lesson plans, the students from the experimental group were exposed to times for analysis and reflection in relation to how actions and choices can either help or undermine people's integrity. Dealing with daily-life issues, such as bullying, while incorporating core values, such as honesty and responsibility, was an excellent way of imparting this message.



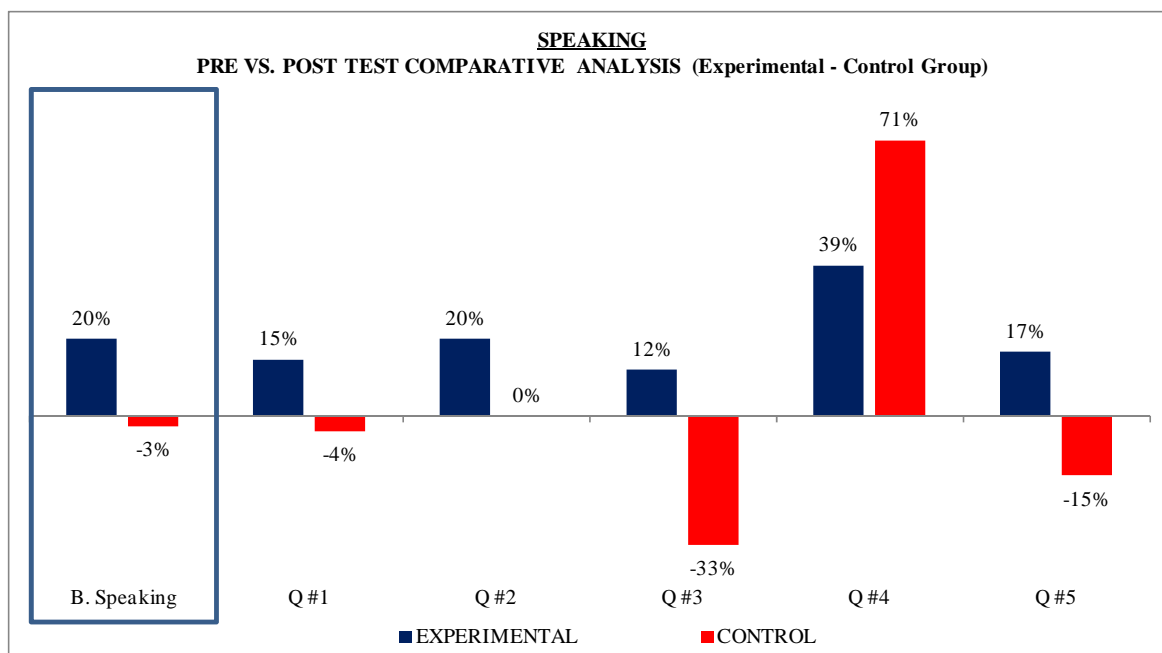
The second part of the Post-test involved Speaking. This part of the test was done one-to-one with each student. Although time-consuming for the teacher, the children from both groups (experimental and control) felt more confident and relaxed when answering the questions (related to the story they watched) than they previously did on the Pre-test.

Regarding the five questions of the Speaking section, Chart 6 shows the results obtained by the experimental and the control group after the project application. The horizontal axis presents the number of the question and the vertical axis shows the percentage of correct answers in each question.

Chart 6. Post-Test Results SPEAKING

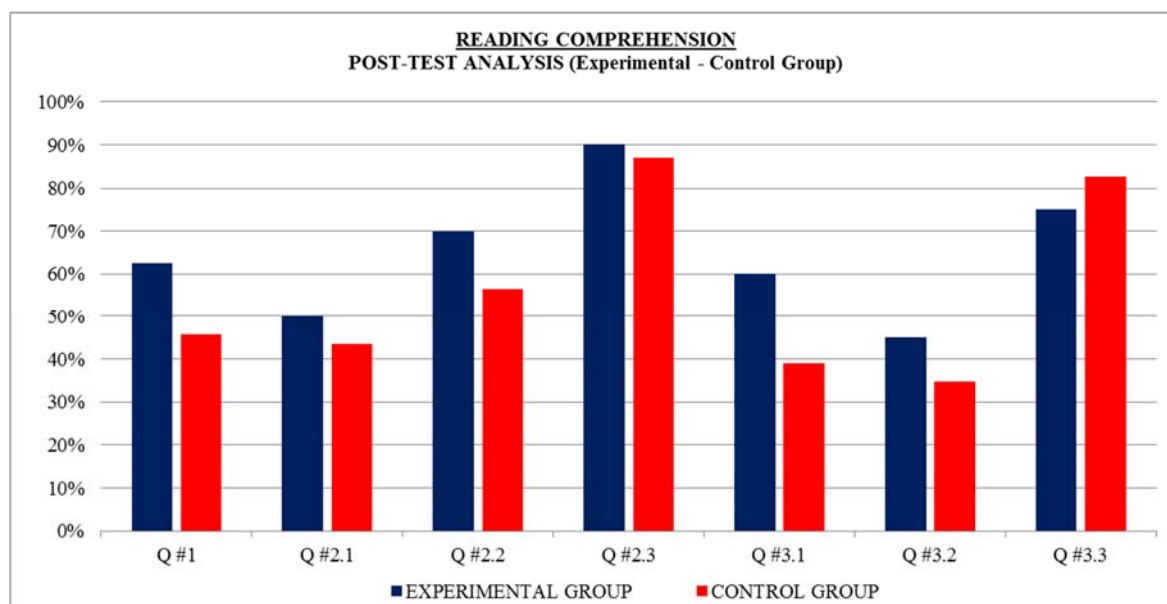


As we can see, the results of the Post-test reveal that the students from the experimental group have considerably improved their oral production compared to the ones from the control group. While the children from the experimental group improved their oral language skills by 20%, the students from the control group slightly decreased their results by 3%. This may be due to the fact that the subjects of the experimental group had lots of opportunities for oral interaction inside the classroom all through the thirteen classes that were implemented as part of this dissertation. They were able to explore and use the target language in authentic context as they dealt with real-life issues through the use of realistic fiction books.

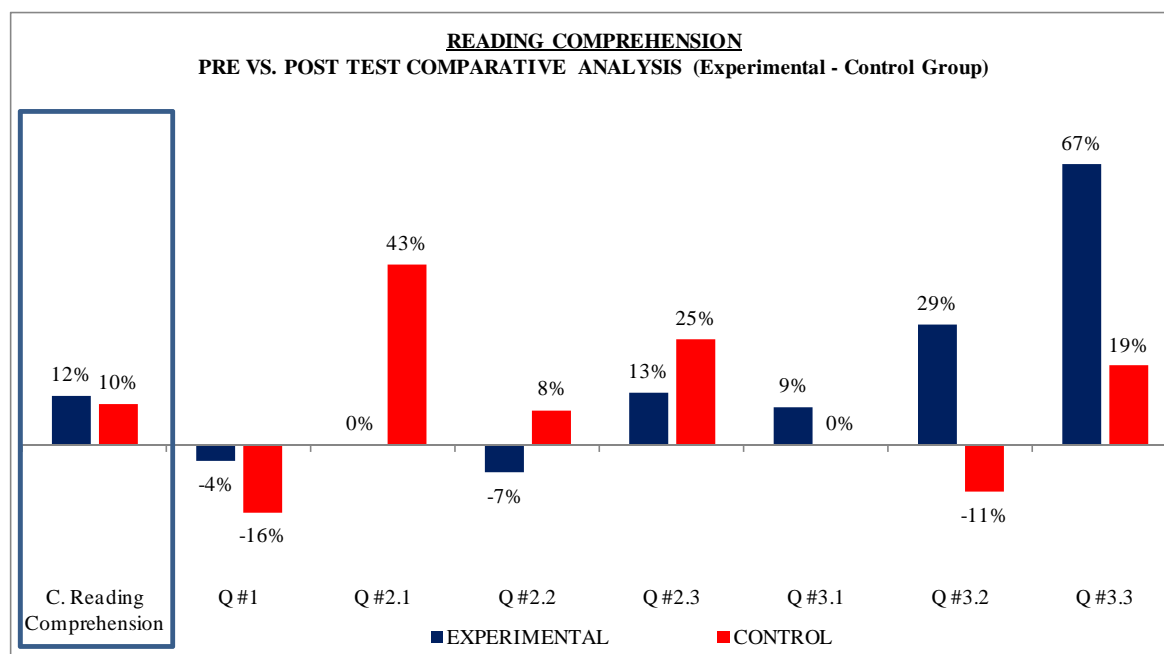


The third part of the Post-test involved Reading. Regarding the different questions of this section, Chart 7 shows the results obtained by the experimental and the control group after the Post-test application. We can see that even if there is not substantial difference between the results of both groups, still the students from the experimental group scored slightly better than the ones from the control group.

Chart 7. Post-Test Results READING



When analyzing the changes in performance from the Pre-test to the Post-test of both groups, it is noticeable that both groups had an improvement ranging from 10% to 12%. This similar level of improvement does not allow to conclude that the activities implemented as part of this dissertation in regards to reading comprehension allowed the students of the experimental group to obtain superior results. Yet, questions number 3.1-3.2 and 3.3 bring evidence that the programmed activities along with the innovations made (based on the Pre-test results) to the thematic realistic fiction lesson plans helped the kids from the experimental group acquire and learn new words by using context clues. On these questions, the experimental group improved their grading by 9%, 29% and 67% respectively. The chart below shows those differences.

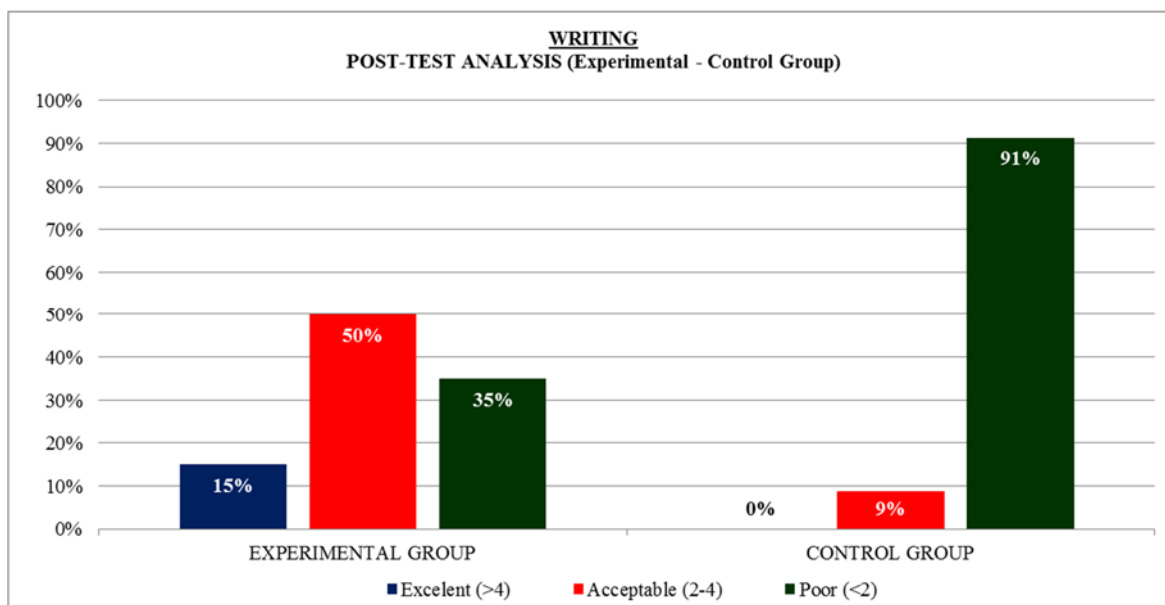


The fourth part of the Post-test involved Writing. All the students struggled a lot with verb tenses, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, subject-verb-agreement, word order, among others. The students also found it hard to express their ideas through writing.

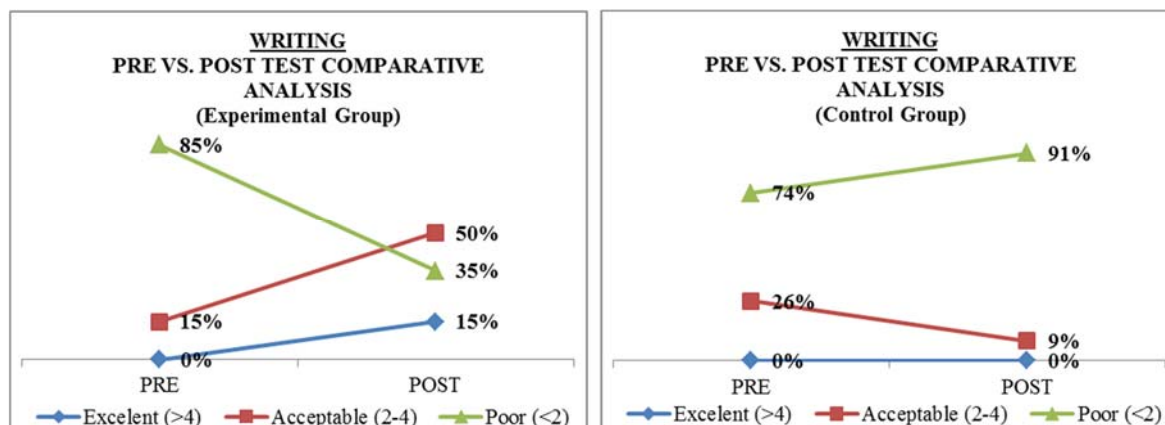
Regarding the writing part of the Post-test, Chart 8 shows the results. We can see that the students from the experimental group have considerably improved their writing skills. While 0% of these students fell in the EXCELLENT category in the Pre-test, 15% of them fell

under this category on the Post-test. While 15% of the students were under the ACCEPTABLE category on the Pre-test, 50% were under this category on the Post-test. While 85% of these students fell under the POOR category on the Pre-test, only 35% did on the Post-test.

Chart 8. Post-Test Results WRITING



Meanwhile, no students from the control group were able to reach the Excelent category, and the percentage of children under the acceptable category fell from 26% to 9%. This clearly shows that the writing exercises provided in the different thematic realistic fiction lesson plans enhanced the experimental group students' writing skills significantly above those of the students from the control group.



4.5. EXPECTED RESULTS

This dissertation aims to demonstrate that with quality children's realistic fiction books in the EFL classroom, children will improve their oral language proficiency, and their ability to manage day to day issues, such as bullying, while nurturing honesty and responsibility as core values. Besides, this project attempts to determine if the use of realistic fiction books, selected according to age, linguistic knowledge and particular interests and needs of students, will lead to a more meaningful learning. The rationale behind the selection of the books “The Recess Queen”, “Jamaica’s Find”, and “Strega Nona” is precisely to evince that children’s realistic fiction is a effective tool for teachers to use in the EFL classroom. Teachers can use these books to invite, persuade, and motivate children to use the target language in a relaxed environment, as they relate to the characters in the stories dealing with real-life issues.

CONCLUSIONS

This dissertation has analyzed the benefits of the use of quality children’s realistic fiction in the EFL classroom among eight to nine year olds. The following conclusions can be drawn from the present study.

- The findings of this study suggest that, in general terms, the use of quality children's realistic fiction in the EFL classroom, improved students' language proficiency, especially in their oral production, vocabulary knowledge and writing skills.
- The use of quality children's realistic fiction opens the door for students to explore the foreign language in a stress-free environment and builds up their confidence to communicate in the target language. Students showed an increased motivation and enthusiasm to express themselves in English throughout the application of the thematic realistic fiction lesson plans. The use of children's realistic fiction in the classroom can offer teachers the possibility to have enhanced levels of cooperation and understanding. It provides students with opportunities to express more openly, as it encourages and allows the flow of their thoughts and feelings.
- The realistic fiction books selected for this project although age-appropriate and well-adjusted to the students' needs and interests had a considerable amount of new vocabulary words. Because of this, at times, children got caught in understanding the meaning of words, instead of following the sequence of the story and lost track of it. The level of English of the students that were part of the experimental group (between an A2 and B1 CEF categorization) was unfortunately overlooked and caused this complication.
- Although there was a significant amount of new words in the readings, they had favorable effects on children, as they came across the opportunity of expanding their vocabulary knowledge. They learned a new way of finding out the meaning of words like inferring words from context, and started to use it as an alternative to dictionaries, which was a limited resource during the reading time. Children's realistic fiction can be an excellent tool for EFL teachers to use in their classrooms to help students develop their vocabulary knowledge since it exposes children to numerous and varied words in context.

- The students' speaking skills improved considerably in most of the subjects from the experimental group (Third Grade 'D') according to the post-test results. Providing students with times to participate in: warm-up activities that elicited them to recall facts or to give opinions about the different stories; in whole group activities that stimulated the use of the foreign language during classroom discussions about similar situations to those experienced by the characters in the books; and, in small group activities that encouraged the use of the target language in a more familiar setting to state personal points of view about issues or values, set up the appropriate scenario for oral language development to happen as it allowed more interaction in English among the children. Children's realistic fiction can be a successful interactive/communicative tool to be used with students in EFL classrooms, as it encourages them to share ideas, feelings and opinions through discussions and personal reflections.
- The students' writing skills also evidenced a significant improvement in the children from the experimental group compared to the ones from the control group according to the data obtained by the post-test. This difference in results is, basically, due to the quantity of time destined to work on writing skills with the students from Third Grade 'D' (experimental group). Throughout the different thematic realistic fiction lesson plans, these children had to either do reflective writing on their journals or creative writing as final projects. They were carefully guided by the teacher with tips and clear instructions when doing their writing. These sorts of activities were not experienced by the control group. Teachers can, certainly, use children's realistic fiction in their EFL classroom as a source of inspiration for students to write about. Offering students the possibility to relate themselves with a character appearing in a story or with the problem the character encountered throughout the book are great writing prompts.
- Regarding the latter, it is important to mention that again, the English level of proficiency of students was not taken into account and that caused some inconveniences. The degree of difficulty of the designed writing activities (intended for B1 CEF intermediate learners) was too advanced for the students of the

experimental group whose level of English falls between an A2 and B1 according to the CEF categorization. For this reason, the children got easily frustrated when working on writing activities. They found it very hard and challenging to express their ideas in English; and, their work evidenced a lot of Spanish interference. It might be helpful for teachers to state clear and concise writing goals and tips when working with EFL learners. Doing writing exercises as a whole group activity instead of as an individual practice could reduce anxiety in children and maximize the writing outcome.

- The use of children's realistic fiction books in the classroom enabled the students from Third Grade 'D' (experimental group) to explore daily-life issues, and to learn how to deal with them. The books selected captured their attention as they were exposed to simple story lines, beautiful illustrations, and interesting characterizations. Likewise, the issue of bullying was well-selected because it was discussed from a broader perspective, new to the children (upstander/bystander phenomenon). It offered them an innovative way to face bullies and made them reflect upon their own behavior. When values and issues are taught within the context of children's realistic fiction, students realize traits such as honesty and responsibility, and issues such as bullying are real and important aspects in the world around them. Quality literature dealing with character development themes has the power to expand, strengthen and shape a person's inherent qualities of mind and character vital for inculcating in students important core values.
- Children from the experimental group show a connection with the characters and situations portrayed in the three different realistic fiction books selected for this dissertation. The stories were intrinsically meaningful and provided an authentic source of comprehensible English language input that lowered inhibitions or the "affective filter" (Krashen). These books prompted personal involvement, triggered students' interest and, consequently, let the students take control over their learning.

- The use of quality childrens' realistic fiction in the EFL classroom, undoubtedly, deepened the students' consciousness of core values, such as honesty and responsibility. One way of doing it was by questioning students about the character's actions, reactions and feelings. Small group acting out, role-playing, turning a book into a theatrical version, brainstorming actions, and applying these core values to students' lives with real examples were also some of the planned activities that enhanced the students' experience in relation to the set values. Teachers should incorporate these activities in their classrooms if they wish to extend the realistic fiction book's message of characters struggling with the core value beyond the text.
- Classroom size (20 students as part of the experimental group and 23 in the control group) was convenient during this project implementation because it facilitated the recollection, organization and analysis of the data. Extra time was left for improving and adjusting the thematic realistic fiction lesson plans.
- It is essential to mention that the limited time given to the application of this project was a major setback. This dissertation would have obtained more and better results to demonstrate its real validity and reliability with more time for the experiment and its execution.
- Finally, the cooperation of the school's classroom teacher and students were two key elements that greatly contributed to the successful implementation of this project. Students were always welcoming and showed enthusiasm to participate in the different activities, which was a determinant factor in meeting the established learning objectives from the lesson plans. The classroom teacher observed the process of this experiment in all the thirteen classes and took notes of what worked or did not. These observations give additional value to this dissertation because the information collected is less susceptible to fall into subjectivity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- EFL teachers could benefit more from the incorporation of children's realistic fiction, in order to develop language skills, by keeping in mind that what benefits students the most is not the story itself, but the construction of meaning. This process should be an interactive one between the adult and the child to help him/her interpret the written language based on his/her beliefs, background and experiences.
- Children's quality realistic fiction is recommended as an innovative and effective tool to be used in the EFL classroom. When implementing this sort of literature in the class, children are given more opportunities to express themselves as they feel connected with real characters, experimenting and dealing with real-life situations. The English language is used naturally and in an authentic context.
- It might be helpful for teachers to keep in mind that the main criteria when selecting a book should be the amount of comprehensible input it provides. EFL teachers should make sure that the language used in the books is meaningful if they want the book to be interesting for the students and to provide teachable moments.
- The selection of quality children's realistic fiction is certainly challenging. When choosing a book, it is necessary to take into account the children's interests, needs, age, and cultural background, as well as the length and complexity of the story, the language and vocabulary level, and the quality of the illustrations. The appropriate selection of books according to the student's level of English is particularly important to avoid student's frustration when trying to understand the new vocabulary words, instead of enjoying the story itself.
- Children's literature facilitates vocabulary building since learners are exposed to new words and expressions in a meaningful and realistic context. Inferring words from context, is an innate cognitive ability that is recommended as a resourceful tool for vocabulary development.

- It will be beneficial for EFL learners to be exposed to more vocabulary teaching techniques and strategies, such as explicit explanation of unknown words (through objects, pictures, and gestures), or by providing them with lots of opportunities to hear, say, read and write a new word, since they may not understand the context well enough to infer the meaning of a word.
- Realistic fiction is also useful in the development of the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) as students have the opportunity to listen and learn to listen communicatively when doing reading alouds, and to speak when participating in literary discussions or when acting out in plays. Teachers should provide students with ample opportunities (like the ones mentioned above) to explore the language freely and in context instead of focusing on error correction, which will limit the student's oral production.
- The writing activities designed for this project were too advanced for the participant's level of English. As teachers, we should make the necessary adjustments in our lesson plans to reach the intended needs of students if we truly want them to reach their fullest potential.
- Another aspect to consider is the sampling. When choosing the sample subjects, it is important to keep in mind that they have to meet the particular objectives of the study in question. In the case of this dissertation, although most of the sample participants had an English proficiency level inferior to the one targeted (B1 level according to the CEF), the activities that were used in the classroom were reached because fortunately there was extra time available to make the necessary adjustments in the lesson plans throughout the project's implementation. The students were able to improve their English language skills, found the activities challenging and were able to deal with frustration when it happened.
- Quality children's realistic fiction can serve as a basis to develop stimulating activities for peer interaction, to foster cooperation, to open up avenues for individual expression

and critical thinking, to encourage children's imagination and creativity, to increase exposure to different cultures and costumes, to explore and gain ownership over values, and to deal with daily-life issues.

- In spite of the profitable opportunities quality children's realistic fiction can offer for the teaching and learning of EFL, there are certain limitations to consider in regards to its applicability in practical classroom conditions. It requires a lot of time and work from the teacher's part to modify and use it judiciously in the classroom; it must be adapted to meet the school's curricula, and to the pedagogical needs and English level of students; and it must cover the objectives of each lesson plan.
- Before applying any project or experiment, it is important to test the materials in advance to ensure that the experiment measures what it should and to improve its design before implementing it. The experiment's design is critical for the validity and reliability of the results.
- Equally important when applying an experiment is to be as objective and accurate as possible when registering your observations. Preparing a checklist of the desired behaviors ahead of time and having an independent observer are a great way of ensuring this. In this project, the school classroom teacher was observing and recording the students' behavior as noted above, which helped in keeping objectivity.

FUTURE RESEARCH

- The incorporation of literature in the EFL classroom to help students construct meaning is an area for further analysis, since the idea of using authentic literature and encouraging literary discussions among students (based on their interests, experiences, and prior knowledge) in order to enhance language development, is still debatable according to research.

- Another area of concern that could lead future research is related with the importance of selecting good quality children's literature in order to assure that the students will have the necessary amount of comprehensible input and vocabulary so as to enrich and promote their EFL language development.
- Since the benefits of the incorporation of children's realistic fiction books in the EFL classroom have been acknowledged in this dissertation, future research could be done to compare the incorporation of children's realistic fiction in the EFL classroom with just using good quality realistic fiction in the EFL classroom and no other textbook.
- Another research proposal derived from this research could be the use of quality realistic fiction to develop a more value oriented EFL instruction.

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ANNEX # 1 (PRE AND POST TEST)

COLEGIO TERRANOVA LANGUAGE 3rd GRADE 2014-2015

NAME: _____

TOTAL: _____/30

DATE: _____

A. LISTENING COMPREHENSION

Total____ / 7 pts.

Watch the story: *Stand Tall Molly Lou Melon* by Patty Lovell. You will watch the story twice.

GLOBAL UNDERSTANDING (1 pt.)

Circle the correct answer.

1. The main idea of the story is that Molly Lou_____.
 - a. confidently confronts the class bully at her new school
 - b. can't deal with the school bully because she is shy
 - c. learns that bullies have to be confronted aggressively

UNDERSTANDING DETAILS (1 pt. each)

Circle the correct answer.

Do you remember what qualities Molly Lou Melon has? Qualities make each person different and special.

2. Molly Lou Melon was the _____ girl in the first grade.
 - a. tallest
 - b. thinnest

- c. shortest
3. Molly Lou Melon had _____ teeth that stuck out so far, she could stack pennies on them.
- a. small
b. buck
c. straight
4. Molly Lou Melon was often _____.
- a. fumble fingered
b. very graceful
c. extra careful

UNDERSTANDING VOCABULARY (1 pt. each)

Listen to the words *fumble*, *somersault*, and *reveal* in the story. Then draw a line to match them with the correct definition.

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| 1. fumble | to drop something while trying to catch it |
| 2. somersault | to show something |
| 3. reveal | to do a flip with your body |

B. SPEAKING

Total ____/10 pts.

Respond to the five questions below. (2 pts. each)

1. What did Molly Lou Melon do when Ronald Durkin called her "Bucky-Tooth Beaver?"
2. What advice did Molly Lou Melon take from her Grandma?
3. Did her Grandma's advice help Molly Lou Melon at her new school? How do you know?
4. Why did Ronald feel foolish?
5. How did the story end?

C. READING COMPREHENSION

Total ____/7 pts.

Read the following passage and do the exercises below.

LIAR LIAR PANTS ON FIRE

By: Gordon Korman

Adapted for testing purposes

Zoe is a third grader who has a very large imagination, making her reputation at school a liar that no one believed, or was **fond of**. Zoe -worried that she is not special- has the bad habit of making up outrageous stories and tries to pass them off as the truth in order to get other's attention and to make herself appear more interesting. One day, she was late for school. When she walked into her classroom, her teacher asked why she was late. Zoe said that she had met a famous person on her walk to school, while getting **caught up** in her lie and making it bigger and bigger; her teacher finally got fed up listening to her and sent her to the principal's office. Her principal gave her a stack of pencils to sharpen while he was writing a letter for her to take home. On Zoe's way back to class, she realized that the class had been watching a movie. She was very upset when she found out the movie was about to finish by the time she got back. Her class was supposed to draw a picture of the movie they had watched. It was about an eagle's nest. Zoe's teacher told her that she could draw anything she wanted because she had missed the video. But, again, Zoe lied and said she knew what an eagle looked like because she had one that lived in a nest in her back yard. This last lie became true, but nobody believed her. Will Zoe be able to convince her classmates and teachers that this time she was telling the truth? She made an effort to persuade them to believe in what she was telling them this time, and took a picture of the nest, but it was **blurry**, so they were not able to see it. Her only friend, Josh, went to her house and saw the nest himself. He told her that she had something that made her very special: a real love for birds! Zoe was happy that he could see the eagle's nest she had helped momma eagle build in her backyard. Zoe thought to herself, wow! When I tell the truth people see good things in me!!!

GLOBAL UNDERSTANDING (____/1 pt.)

In one sentence summarize Zoe's problem.

UNDERSTANDING DETAILS. Circle the correct answer. (1 pt each)

1. Zoe lies most of the time because _____.
 - a. she loves using her imagination to tell lies
 - b. her teacher doesn't pay attention to her
 - c. she thinks lying is the best way to get attention

2. Zoe was sent to the principal's office because she _____.
 - a. is responsible for her actions.
 - b. only lies about certain things.
 - c. fed up her teacher with her lies.

3. In the end, Zoe _____.
 - a. realizes that lying is the best way to get attention
 - b. understands that she doesn't have to lie to be special.
 - c. keeps lying because she was happy that way.

VOCABULARY (1 pt. each)

Circle the word that best describes the meaning of the underlined one in bold in the text.

1. Zoe is a third grader who has a very large imagination, making her reputation at school a liar that no one believed, or was **fond of**.
 - a. attached to
 - b. helped by
 - c. opposed to

2. Zoe said she had met a famous person on her walk to school, while getting **caught up** in her lie and making it bigger and bigger, her teacher finally got fed up with her.
 - a. prepared
 - b. fixed
 - c. discovered

3. She made an effort to persuade them, and took a picture of the nest, but it was blurry, so they were not able to see it.

- a. dangerous
- b. unclear
- c. visible

D. WRITING

Total ____/6 pts.

Choose one option from the three below.

1. Write an 80-word blog post for www.honestylessons.com about someone you know whose honesty has impressed you.
2. Write your own 80-word honesty oath for www.honestyoaths.com This is your promise to always be truthful in your words and actions. After you have finished writing, you can decorate and sign your pledge.
3. Think about a time your feelings were hurt because someone lied to you. Write an 80-word mail for www.lyingcanhurt.com to the person who hurt your feelings, explaining why is it important to tell the truth.

OPTION No. _____

ANNEX # 2 (LESSON PLAN #1 – BULLYING)

BOOK: The Recess Queen

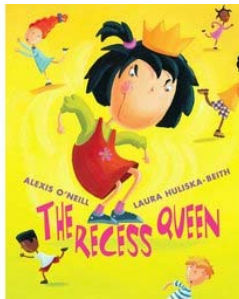
AUTHOR: Alexis O' Neil

ILLUSTRATOR: Laura Huliska-Beith

GRADE LEVEL: 3rd

DURATION: 90 minutes

O' NEIL, Alexis. "The Recess Queen". United States: Scholastic Press, 2002, p.p. 32.



Goals/Aims/Objectives

Students will be able to...

1. Define and give examples of bullying, bully and bullied.
2. Describe how bullying behavior can make people feel and how it affects the community.
3. Describe how being kind and helping others benefits everybody.

EFL Lesson Foci: (20 minutes)

- Vocabulary:
bullying -repeated teasing, hurting or scaring of someone who seems different from oneself **bully** -a person who likes to tease, hurt or scare people. A bully often picks on smaller or weaker people
victim -a person harmed by another
- Grammatical Structure: classify regular and irregular verbs (swung, kicked, bounced, crossed, pushed, smooched, hammered, slammed, growled, howled, grabbed, bullied, bossy, sassy, spoke, believed, hop, jumped, skipped, giggled). As a group deduct rule from text.
- Phonemic Awareness: A Time to Rhyme: find the words that rhyme in the book and make up a new rhyming pair.
- Cultural Focus: mean girls and bullies in popular cultures.
- Reading & Writing: read aloud. Write personal reflections.
- Listening & Speaking: Listen to understand and obtain information in order to discuss a particular issue. Describe and share experiences.

Ice Breaker: (10 minutes)

Invite children to discuss with a partner or in groups of three, the books they read during the summer. Reunite the whole group and have several students share what they discussed in their group.

Warm-Up Activity: (15 minutes)

- It's Hard to Take it Back!: the teacher will give students a piece of paper to crumple and then, to smooth it out. The teacher will relate this to an incident where a child bullies another child. It is very hard to take back unkind words, looks and actions. Make students realize that in a few seconds (just like they did with the paper) they can cause harm and all the effort it takes to restore the hurt. Ask them:
 - How does the paper look? Are you able to bring it back to its original look and feel?
 - What would you do to repair the paper?
 - What kind of emotional effects bullying leaves on someone?
- Discuss. The teacher will chart the answers to leave them posted in the class.

Reading and Response Activities: (35 minutes)

1. Read the story **The Recess Queen** out loud.
2. Have students look at the pictures and listen carefully to discuss how they feel about Mean Jean who was acting like a bully and the children who felt hurt. Discuss how the characters felt during the bullying and after they resolved the issue.
3. Bullying, bully and bullied (victim): define these words by referring to the video in the following link <http://pbskids.org/itsmylife/friends/bullies> and ask students to describe the behaviors they have seen that look how a bully or a victim might act.
4. Ask students to describe situations that might make someone feel hurt or bad. Explain that all hurtful situations are not bullying. Share the following examples of hurtful behavior to discuss: How would that make you feel? Is it bullying? What can you do in that situation?
 - One of your classmates says aloud in class that your idea is very silly.
 - You ask your friend to sit next to you, but she/he decides to sit somewhere else.
 - A student makes fun of you often because of the shoes you are wearing.
 - Students push other students in line for the swings at the playground.
 - A girl in the school bus hides your lunchbox every day.

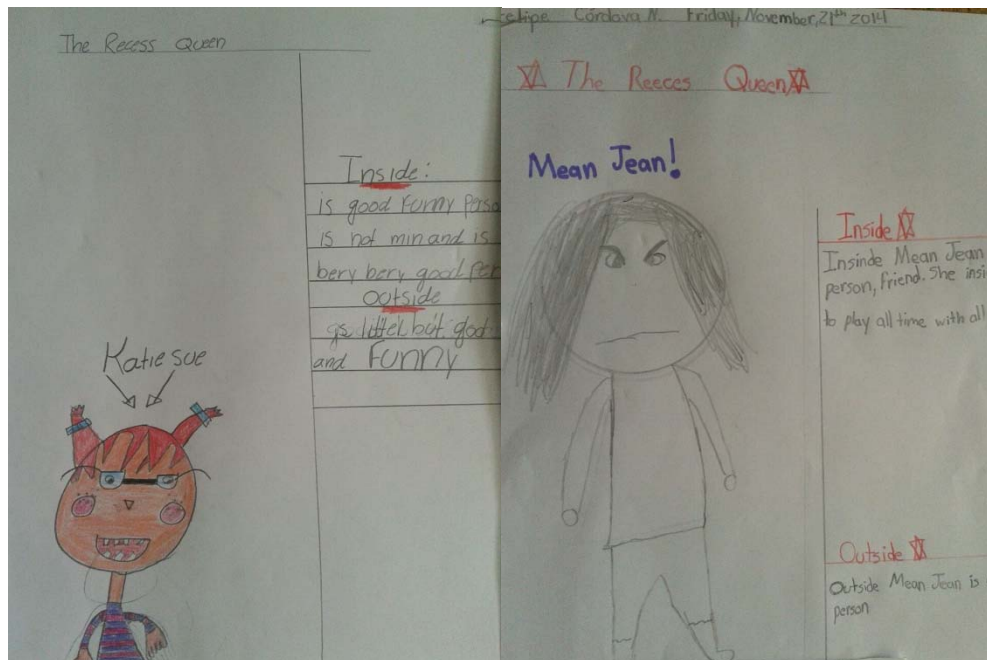
Wrap-Up (10 minutes)

- ✓ Reflection: Write in their journals and answer the following questions: What negative acts have you seen at schools that have made feel bad? What positive acts can you do at school to make you feel good?

Resources and Materials

- Book "The Recess Queen"
- Chart paper
- Markers
- Pencils
- Tape
- Regular and irregular verbs list
- Vocabulary words

ANNEX # 3 (THE RECESS QUEEN DRAWINGS)



ANNEX # 4 (LESSON PLAN #2 – BULLYING)

BOOK: The Recess Queen

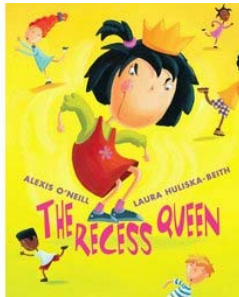
AUTHOR: Alexis O' Neil

ILLUSTRATOR: Laura Huliska-Beith

GRADE LEVEL: 3rd

DURATION: 90 minutes

O' NEIL, Alexis. "The Recess Queen". United States: Scholastic Press, 2002, p.p. 32.



Goals/Aims/Objectives

Students will be able to...

1. Recall and sequence the events in a story.
2. Describe characters in a story (their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.
3. Find connections between their personal lives and the ones from characters in the stories.
4. Understand what a bully is and what to say to a bully.
5. Explore creative ways of solving problems.

EFL Lesson Foci: (20 minutes)

- Vocabulary: bounce, smooch, hammer, slammer, growl, howl, grab, bossy, sassy, giggle, tattling.
- Grammatical Structure: action Words (from story): sing, shout, giggle, stare, breathe, pull, grab...
- Phonemic Awareness: break words apart to look for features like blends or vowel teams.
- Cultural Focus: mean girls and bullies in popular cultures.
- Reading & Writing: Read to recall facts and information. Write to identify main ideas and supporting details.
- Listening & Speaking: use speaking and listening to develop thinking by making connections and questions.

Warm-Up Activity: (20 minutes)

- Discussion Starters:
 1. Why did the recess queen act the way she did? What can cause people to act in certain ways?
 2. What did Katie Sue do that surprised Jean?
 3. How did Jean feel when Katie asked her to jump rope?

- Ask students: What is a bully? Have you ever been bullied or seen someone else be bullied? What does bullying look like? Write ideas on whiteboard and discuss.
- Make a T-chart about Tattling vs. Telling situations from the story. (Watch video to understand the difference at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7H21_mkimkM)

Reading and Response Activities: (40 minutes)

1. Listen to the story **The Recess Queen** at www.youtube.com/watch?v=svePlhGpTfo
2. Choose a main character from the story (Mean Jean or Katie Sue). Draw and describe it on the “outside” and in the “inside”.
3. Whole Group Activity: share pictures and discuss the following questions. Why is Mean Jean’s size different to everyone else’s? Why do you think the illustrator make Mean Jean so big? What happens to the size of Mean Jean by the end of the story? Why?
4. Reading Response Journals: children will write about an experience of a time they think they have been bullied or seen someone else be bullied. They will describe what the conflict was, how it began, where it took place. Then talk about their resolution. Tell how they decided on that solution, if it worked, and what they could have done differently. It must be at least 5 sentences. If they can’t find one, they might imagine: Finish this story “One day, Mean Jean moved to my school....”

Wrap-Up (10 minutes)

- ✓ Making connections: Divide the class into three groups:
 Group # 1: writes a list of words that describe how it feels to be around someone like Mean Jean.
 Group # 2: writes a list of words that describe how Mean Jean might feel when he/she is being mean.
 Group # 3: writes a list of words describing how Katie Sue felt on the playground.
 Ask the groups to read their lists aloud. Are there any words that are in more than one list? How does that happen?

Resources and Materials

- Video “The Recess Queen”
- Markers/Crayons/ Color pencils
- Pencils
- Journals
- Whiteboard
- Word cards

ANNEX # 5 (LESSON PLAN #3 – BULLYING)

BOOK: The Recess Queen

AUTHOR: Alexis O' Neil

ILLUSTRATOR: Laura Huliska-Beith

GRADE LEVEL: 3rd

DURATION: 90 minutes

O' NEIL, Alexis. "The Recess Queen". United States: Scholastic Press, 2002, p.p. 32.



Goals/Aims/Objectives

Students will be able to...

1. Learn and explore some actions to stand up to bullying.
2. Find their own solutions when faced with challenging situations.
3. Effectively engage in collaborative discussions, based on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
4. Integrate acquired knowledge into real-life situations for the prevention of bullying by reflecting upon and stating their opinion.

EFL Lesson Foci: (20 minutes)

- Vocabulary: upstander, bystander, policy, anonymous.
- Grammatical Structure: sentence structure: drag scrambled words to create a sentence.
- Phonemic Awareness: break words into syllables: clap once for each part of the word to say how many syllables (use vocabulary words).
- Cultural Focus: mean girls and bullies in popular cultures.
- Reading & Writing: write about what they read/watch to improve comprehension and to state their own point of view.
- Listening and Speaking: interact with information presented in diverse media.

Warm-Up Activity: (10 minutes)

- Discussion Starters:
 1. Do you have a bullying policy in school? If so, what is it about?
 2. In your own words, what is the definition of bullying?
 3. What does bullying look and sound like?

Reading and Response Activities: (40 minutes)

1. Watch video “Be An Upstander” (by the NED Show) at www.youtube.com/watch?v=eeqQCyQOCPg
2. Whole Group Activity:
 - Remember: What is the difference between a Bystander and an Upstander? Name the four ways to go from being a bystander to an upstander. Record the students’ responses on a chart (to keep it).
 - Understand: What are some examples of non-physical bullying? Where do you see bullying take place at your school? How does bullying look and sound like?
 - Apply: how can you “break in” bullying in the classroom? During recess? On the bus?
 - Analyze: Does telling an adult is tattling? What is the difference between tattling and telling? Give examples to explain the difference. How do the different characters in the video felt right at the moment of bullying?
 - Evaluate: Is it true for you that in order to be an upstander you need to be courageous and to work hard? Why or why not? Why does someone choose to bully?

Wrap-Up (20 minutes)

- ✓ Writing: students will choose from one of the two prompts mentioned below, and write their opinions in their Reading Response Journals.
- Complete this sentence. Upstanders are_____because_____. How can I be an Upstander?
 - Bullying does not have to be physical or even face-to-face. Describe some examples of “anonymous bullying”.

Resources and Materials

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| - Video “Be An Upstander” | - Journals |
| - Markers/Crayons/ Color pencils | - Vocabulary words |
| - Whiteboard | |

FINAL PROJECT – BULLYING

Make a theatrical representation of the Recess Queen. Students will be divided in two groups for this project. Since there are not enough characters, the story will have some adaptations, so that everybody will have a role and get to participate in the play.

ANNEX # 5a (WRITING EXERCISE SAMPLES - UPSTANDERS)

What is an Upstander?

An upstander is people that is good, because they help the people that are being bullied by an other bully how can I be an upstander? You can be an upstander doing this: If you see bullying you can help the person that is being bullied by an other person and tell to someone else.

Juan José Aguilar

Today is Wednesday, November 26, 2014

"Be an Upstander."

1. Upstanders are brave because they speak out loud, they help each other, they tell someone else and they never give up.

2. How can I be an Upstander? I would tell an adult and ask for help I would interrupt and help the person.

Norma Armandine Al.

Norma

Tuesday, November 25th 2014

Bullying

Upstanders are: There are four ways to be an upstander: 1. Be a buddy. 2. Interrupt. 3. Speak out. 4. Tell someone. Because you never have to give up to being an upstander, being an upstander you can help your friends to not be bullied. How can I be an upstander? Tell the adults that there is bullying somewhere.

Surah Lizarzaburu

Becoming a upstander

Upstanders are kids who do something that prevents or reduces the bullying they see because there are a lot of kids victims of bullying.

How can I be an upstander?

You can be an upstander following the next steps:

* Takes courage by telling the bully to stop

* Takes action by getting others to stand up with them to the bully

* Takes assertives by helping the victim

* Takes leadership: Upstanders are leaders in their social groups.

Norma van Beek

Norma

ANNEX # 6 (THEATRICAL DIALOGUE SAMPLES)

Mean Jean:

I am the recess queen and no body kick until I kick
no body swing until I swing and no body bounce
until I bounce.

Say what, say who, say you! who you think you are
talking to.

Katie Sue:

You are not the recess queen! everybody
have the right to be free, and play before
you play.

Kids:

No Katie Sue, Mean Jean is the recess queen
and no body bounce until she bounce, no body
kick until she kick and no body swing until she
swing.

Felipe C. Andres A. Naima van Beek, Victoria C.

The bad king

Carlos (Felipe): I'm the recess king

Daniel (Andres): You are the recess king I'm the prince

Sofia (Naima): Why are you the recess king and Prince

Paula (Vicky): Yes why

Carlos (Felipe) because I am the first in all.

Sofia (Naima) All the kids can play

Daniel (Andrés) only Carlos and me can play.

Naima: No all need to play

Vicky: We need to play all together

ANNEX # 7 (LESSON PLAN #4 – HONESTY)

BOOK: Jamaica's Find

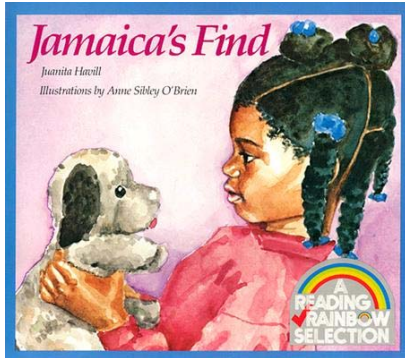
AUTHOR: Juanita Havill

ILLUSTRATOR: Anne Sibley O' Brien

GRADE LEVEL: 3rd

DURATION: 90 minutes

HAVILL, Juanita. "Jamaica's Find". United States: HMH Books for Young Readers, 1987, p.p. 32.



Goals/Aims/Objectives

Students will be able to...

4. Define what "honesty" and "dishonesty" are.
5. List qualities of someone honest and someone dishonest.
6. Relate to stories of honest people.

EFL Lesson Foci: (20 minutes)

- Vocabulary: climbed, tossed, worn, forgotten, returned, squeezed, quietly, stayed, cuddly, plopped.
- Grammatical Structures:
Sentence Editing: Write a sentence from the book, with lots of mistakes, on the whiteboard. Make the children take turns to edit the sentence: (Correct use of writing conventions such as capitals, periods and transition words).

**"she sat in a swing pushed off with her toes and
began pumping it was fun not to have to watch out
for the little ones who always ran in front of the
swings"**

- Phonemic Awareness: students will manipulate phonemes by substituting initial sounds (using vocabulary word list).
- Cultural Focus: talk about Jamaica's ethnic background: African-Americans.
- Reading & Writing: teacher will read aloud the book and prompt students to infer information about the characters from their facial expressions. Students will write simple sentences to create their own definitions.
- Listening & Speaking: students will listen to a read aloud, and a song. They will have the opportunity to express and share personal stories.

Ice Breaker: (10 minutes)

- M&M Game:

Children will grab from a bowl the amount of candy they desire (not too many rule). For each piece of candy they took, they will have to answer a question, depending on its color. For example:

- Red Candy: favorite food
- Green candy: favorite movie
- Yellow candy: favorite animals
- Blue candy: favorite books
- Orange candy: favorite vacation
- Brown candy: Recall...what is responsibility? (They can choose to talk about any topic that has been previously discussed)

Warm-Up Activity: (15 minutes)

- Finding Honesty

Ask students to create and write their own definitions for what honesty is from these examples:

- You broke a glass. Your mother asks who broke the glass and you tell her you did it.
(Honesty means telling the truth, so you were honest when telling you did it)
- You take a friend's toy and put it in your backpack without asking him/her.
(Taking something is not yours is dishonest. Asking for it is honest)
- You heard a rumor, but you are not sure if it is true, so you don't spread it.
(Spreading rumors even if they are true is not a nice thing to do because you are being dishonest)
- Your dad said not to play Wii. You hide to play it, but you don't tell your dad about it so you didn't lie.
(Even if you don't get caught, sneaking and hiding your actions is not an honest choice)

Then, write on the board: HONESTY IS TELLING THE TRUTH AND ACTING UPON IT.

Reading and Response Activities: (30 minutes)

5. Read the book "Jamaica's Find" out loud.
6. Tell of an experience that you as a teacher had when you were honest. Share how you felt about it.
7. Whole Class Discussion: ask students to tell/share a short story about a time when they were honest. Discuss the consequences of being honest vs. dishonest.
8. Small group Reflection: have students work in groups of three to identify and list the values addressed in the story based on the following ideas:
 - Credibility could be destroyed when telling lies.
 - Sometimes people lie to protect other's feelings.
 - Sometimes people lie to mask mistakes
 - Sometimes people lie because of fear
 - Lying can be necessary or good in certain situations

Wrap-Up (15 minutes)

✓ Listen and respond: children will listen to the song Honesty and answer the following questions:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9SFe6O29P3E>

- What did the girl in the song try to do that was dishonest?
- Did Dan made a good choice? Was he dishonest or honest?
- What did Joe found on the street? What did he do? Why was he honest?
- What happens if you decide to be honest?

Resources and Materials

- Book “Jamaica’s Find”
- Whiteboard
- Markers
- Chart paper
- Pencils
- Honesty Song
- Vocabulary word list

ANNEX # 8 (LESSON PLAN #5 – HONESTY)

BOOK: Jamaica's Find

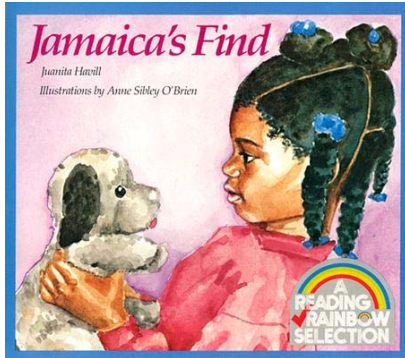
AUTHOR: Juanita Havill

ILLUSTRATOR: Anne Sibley O' Brien

GRADE LEVEL: 3rd

DURATION: 90 minutes

HAVILL, Juanita. "Jamaica's Find". United States: HMH Books for Young Readers, 1987, p.p. 32.



Goals/Aims/Objectives

Students will be able to...

6. Acknowledge that being honest is not only what you say and act towards others, but also understanding what is being honest with oneself.
7. Discover what conscience is, how it helps us make good choices and gain self-control.
8. Identify that honesty is the best policy at the end.

EFL Lesson Foci: (20 minutes)

- Vocabulary: climbed, tossed, worn, forgotten, returned, squeezed, quietly, stayed, cuddly, plopped.
- Grammatical Structures: choose three vocabulary words to write a meaningful sentence.
- Phonemic Awareness: break words apart to look for features like blends or two vowels together.
- Cultural Focus: talk about Jamaica's ethnic background: African-Americans.
- Reading & Writing: make a list of descriptive words used in the book and use them while writing. (Correct use of writing conventions such as capitals, periods and transition words). Write a reflection based on prompts.
 - Lost & Found Posters: children will choose a favorite animal from the pictures provided by the teacher. Then, they will have to create lost and found posters for the animal they chose including at least four descriptive words describing the pet. (This is a two-day project)
- Listening & Speaking: listen to other's point of view by stating personal opinions.

Warm-Up Activity: (15 minutes)

- Revisit the book "Jamaica's Find":

1. What would happen if Jamaica decided to keep the stuffed dog forever?
2. Why do you think Jamaica tells her mother she doesn't feel well enough to do her chores?
3. What was the consequence of being dishonest?
4. At the end, what did the Jamaica realize?

Reading and Response Activities: (40 minutes)

1. Journal writing: have students reflect upon and answer these questions on the journals:

Your best friend asks you to help her cheat on a test. She has never done it before and promises she will never do it again. Reflect.

- What does my conscience say about it?
- Could it hurt anyone, including me?
- Deep down how do I feel about it?

2. What Should You Do Game: this game will help them understand ownership of their behaviors. Provide students with different scenarios (outlining typical classroom situations) where they have to recognize that choices implement consequences and that to prevent further consequences we need to own up to our behavior. Example:

- There is a pencil on the table. It is not yours, but you really like it. You put it in your backpack to take it home. What should you do?

With each scenario that is solved provide the children with a piece of the sandwich. Once they have 'made a sandwich', the game is complete.

Wrap-Up (15 minutes)

- ✓ Making connections: Share with the children the phrase "It takes years to build up trust and only seconds to destroy it". Discuss its meaning with them.

Resources and Materials

- Cardboard
- Animal pictures
- Sandwich pieces (made out of cardboard)
- Whiteboard
- Markers/Crayons/ Color pencils
- Pencils
- Journals
- Descriptive words list:

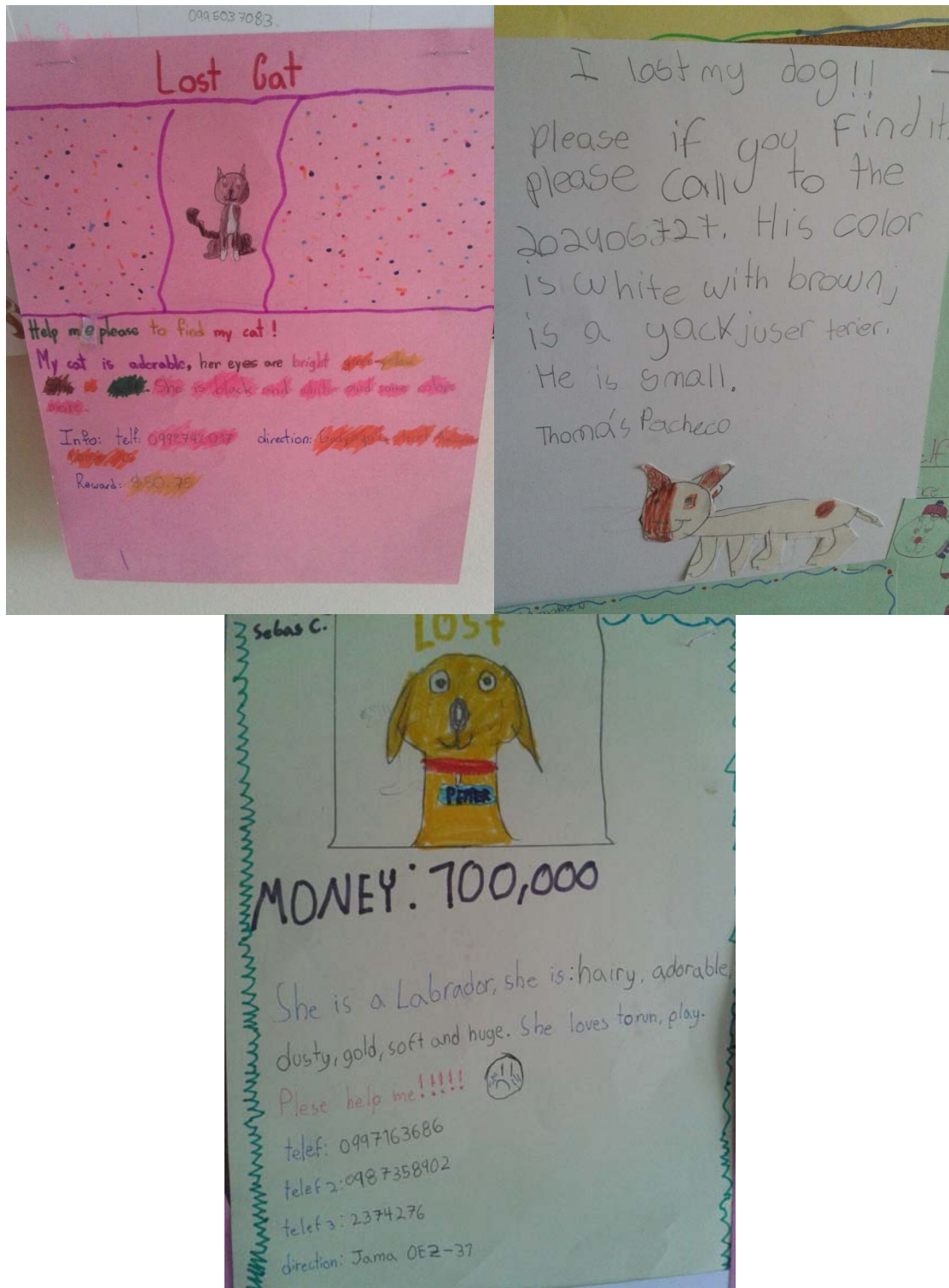
List of Descriptive Words

Brown
Silver
Gold
Pink
Colorful
Bright
Spotty
Prickly
Happy
Small
Smooth
Shiny
Soft
Hard
Sad

Waxy
Sharp
Stinky
Flat
Huge
Long
Short
Round
Thin
Wide
Tall
Short
Hairy
Adorable
Heavy

Fuzzy
Bumpy
Light
Dirty
Dusty
Fluffy
Red
Blue
Green
Gray
Orange
Purple
Yellow
Black
Tan

ANNEX # 9 (LOST AND FOUND POSTERS)



ANNEX # 10 (INFERRING GRAPHIC ORGANIZER)

Name: _____

Inferring the Meaning of New Words

Book Title: _____

Author: _____

New word	What I INFER the word means	Clues from the text

ANNEX # 11 (LESSON PLAN #6 – HONESTY)

BOOK: Jamaica's Find

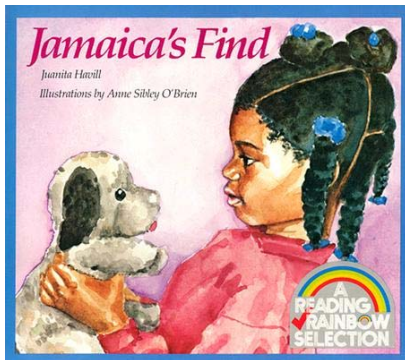
AUTHOR: Juanita Havill

ILLUSTRATOR: Anne Sibley O' Brien

GRADE LEVEL: 3rd

DURATION: 90 minutes

HAVILL, Juanita. "Jamaica's Find". United States: HMH Books for Young Readers, 1987, p.p. 32.



Goals/Aims/Objectives

Students will be able to...

5. List ways they can be honest at home and at school.
6. Identify ways to tell whether or not something is the right thing to do.
7. Use their experience and acquired knowledge to create useful tools to promote and encourage honesty in the community.

EFL Lesson Foci: (20 minutes)

- Vocabulary: climbed, tossed, worn, forgotten, returned, squeezed, quietly, stayed, cuddly, plopped, pledge.
- Grammatical Structure: choose the best definition for the new vocabulary words based on the text.
- Phonemic Awareness: break words apart to look for features like blends or two vowels together.
- Cultural Focus: talk about Jamaica's ethnic background: African-Americans.
- Reading & Writing: individualized reading and reflective writing (pledges). They will keep working in using the descriptive words from the book to use them while writing (correct use of writing conventions such as capitals, periods and transition words).
 - Lost & Found Posters: children will choose a favorite animal from the pictures provided by the teacher. Then, they will have to create lost and found posters for the animal they chose including at least four descriptive words describing the pet.
- Listening & Speaking: listen to respond and share ideas. Participate in role-playing to express reasons.

Warm-Up Activity: (20 minutes)

- What a Tangled Web We Wove!:
 - Talk to a student ahead of time to help with this demonstration. Secretly ask him to give false answers to the questions asked. Have the student seat on a chair in front of the class and ask him/her a simple questions such as Why didn't you get your homework done for today? As the student answers with a lie like "The dog ate my homework", wrap around him/her a long string of yarn. Ask him/her a follow-up question based on his/her reply like "How did the dog get your homework?"Wrap the yarn around him/her again. Continue asking follow-up questions until he/she is tangled in a web of yarn. After the class has observed the situation, discuss the following:
 - Can you see what telling lies can do to someone?
 - Why is it important to tell the truth?
 - Ask them to tell about a time they were caught in a lie and had to tell another lie in order to cover it up. How did you feel?

Reading and Response Activities: (30 minutes)

3. Students will reread "Jamaica's Find" out loud taking turns.
4. Whole Group Activity: ask students to think what they can do at home and at school to be honest. The teacher will write down their ideas and discuss them as a group.
5. Role Playing: the class will be divided into two groups and they will role-play different situations. In each role play half of the group will do the wrong thing and the other half the right thing. Each half will have to give strong reasons for their side. Discuss results.
 - A group of children you think are really cool are bullying another kid. They ask you to join them and say you are not cool if you don't do it. You don't want to be left out, but you know bullying is not acceptable. What do you do?
 - You are walking on the street and you see that a lady drops a ten dollar bill without realizing she did it. A man comes along and takes the money. What do you do?
 - You are very hungry and you forgot your lunchbox. At the bar, there is a lot of fruit and it looks so good...you think to yourself "Is just one apple..." No one is looking. What do you do?

Wrap-Up (20 minutes)

- ✓ Reflective Writing: on a handprint cutout, students will write at least five things they can say to themselves when they are tempted to do something wrong. They will post them near their beds so they can read them from time to time.

Resources and Materials

- Descriptive words list
- Whiteboard
- Chart paper
- Handprint cutouts
- Markers/Crayons/ Color pencils
- Pencils
- Yarn
- Animal pictures

ANNEX # 12 (TIPS ON HOW TO WRITE)

- Come up with an idea
- Organize thoughts around that idea
- Make a draft
- Revise and edit your work.
- Add more detail, clarify parts of your writing that are confusing, and choose more descriptive words in your writing.

Name _____ Date _____ Class Period _____

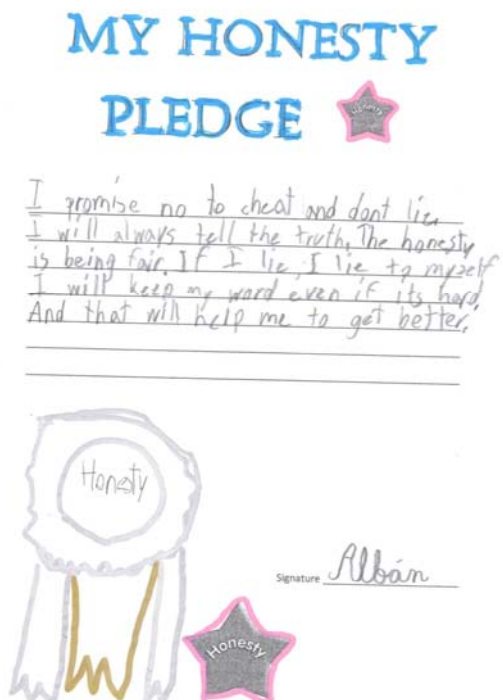
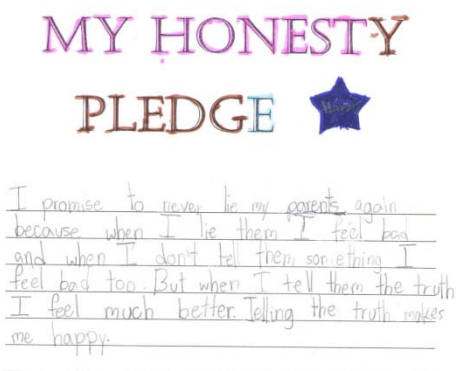
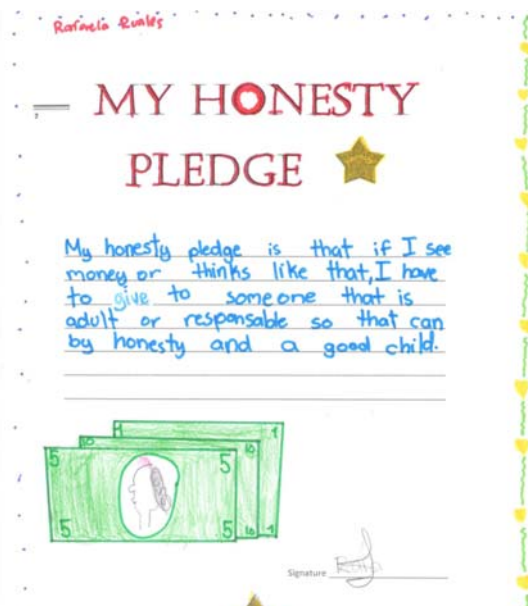
Writing Organizer Web

Directions: Use this organizer to plan your writing project by placing the required items in the designated areas. Use the dotted circles for details and examples. You may draw additional lines and circles as needed.




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ANNEX # 13 (FINAL PROJECT – HONESTY)

Our Own Pledges: students will work individually to write their own Honesty Pledges. Teacher will walk around the class to assist them with the writing process. When ready, the pledges will be bonded together in a classroom book entitled “Honesty is the Best Policy”. This will be shared with other classrooms.



ANNEX # 14 (STREGA NONA PREDICTIONS)

Before Reading	During Reading	After Reading
 <p>The history is going to be about a woman that do potions to the people.</p>	<p>Antony is going to be a no so much good helper because he was curious which the potion</p> 	<p>that Antony do pasta like strega nona with magic and he was supposed to not touch the potion.</p> 

Before Reading	During Reading	After Reading
A grandma with a magic pot.	Anthony is going to help good to Strega nona but he was to curious	He take the magic pot and do pasta but latter he do a mess,

Sarah Lizarzaburu

Before reading	During reading	After reading
A little baby and a Woman in the camp of a little city.	a Woman of a city course the people and she was so good. And Anthony is mischivious and bad.	Strega nona has a pasta pot and Antony take the pot. and that was bad. Very bad.
I was wrong it was of magic. And a grandma.	I was right. Yeaaaaa!	

Before reading

The story is
about a
grandma that
live in a
campus

During Reading

Antony is going to
be a good helper.

he was a bad helper
because he didn't
obey Nona

After Reading

After Antony take
the pot he said the
magic words but
he don't know
how to stop the
spagetti

Vicki A.

ANNEX # 15 (LESSON PLAN #7 – RESPONSIBILITY)

BOOK: Strega Nona

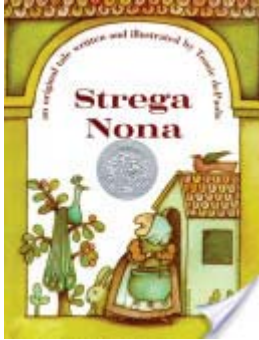
AUTHOR: Tomie de Paola

ILLUSTRATOR : Tomie de Paola

GRADE LEVEL: 3rd

DURATION: 90 minutes

DE PAOLA, Tomie. "Strega Nona". United States: Aladdin; Reprint edition, 1979, p.p.32



Goals/Aims/Objectives

Students will be able to...

7. Use their prior knowledge to make predictions.
8. Refine predictions as they read to understand the story.
9. Identify character emotions and how their feelings change throughout a story.
10. Relate characters' emotions to their personal lives in order to begin to understand what is to be responsible.

EFL Lesson Foci: (20 minutes)

- Vocabulary:

Calabria -a region in Italy

Grandma Witch -an old woman who knows magic

Magic Pot -a cooking pot that has magic powers

Predict -using the pictures, the title, and what children already know to make guesses about a story before, during and after reading.

- Grammatical Structure: make new words from a root word by adding a suffix (talk-ed, wash-ed, pick-ed, milk-ing, fetch-ing, eat-ing)
- Phonemic Awareness: sound substitution: What rhymes with pig and ends with /g/?
- Cultural Focus: a little look at Italy.
- Reading & Writing: read to make predictions. Use their voice in writing (express feelings, ideas and opinions).
- Listening & Speaking: listen to recall information and use their life experiences to answer questions.

Ice Breaker: (20 minutes)

- Fact or Fiction?

Children will write on a piece of paper three things about themselves which may not be known to the others in the group. Two are true and one is not. Taking turns they read out the three 'facts' about themselves and the rest of the group votes which are true and false.

Warm-Up Activity: (20 minutes)

On a handmade cooking pot, put the vocabulary words/phrases, and the definition of *predict*. Remove one by one the vocabulary words/phrases and tell the students that these appear along the story and ask them about their meaning. The teacher can use a map to show the students where *Calabria* is located in Italy. Motivate students to ask for the meaning of other words (if necessary), while reading the book.

Reading and Response Activities: (40 minutes)

9. Read the story **Strega Nona** out loud.
10. As reading the book, stop at different points for the students to make predictions and keep reading to prove their guesses. At a first stop, children will have to draw/write their predictions on the *Prediction Worksheet* (before reading). Make a second stop and ask students "What is going to happen now? Why? What in the text makes you believe that? Are there any changes that we need to make to our predictions? What do you think will happen next?" (Write or draw predictions in the "during reading" section on worksheet). Encourage students to explain their thinking and reasoning as they discuss changes or verifications to their predictions, and to use complete phrases when making their predictions "I think the old lady on the front is a witch and that she has a magic pot because....."
11. Turn and Talk: after reading the whole story, in pairs, they will have to discuss the importance of finding evidence in the text to verify their predictions or to prove them wrong. They will have to discuss their initial predictions, and complete the "after reading" section on the *Prediction Worksheet*.

Wrap-Up (10 minutes)

- ✓ Whole Class Discussion: students will discuss what where the different feelings the characters had throughout the story and the teacher will make a chart to record their responses. Have you ever felt like Big Anthony from the story? When?

Resources and Materials

- Book "Strega Nona"
- Prediction Worksheet
- Markers
- Chart paper (cooking pot)
- Vocabulary word cards
- Pencils

ANNEX # 16 (LESSON PLAN #8 – RESPONSIBILITY)

BOOK: Strega Nona

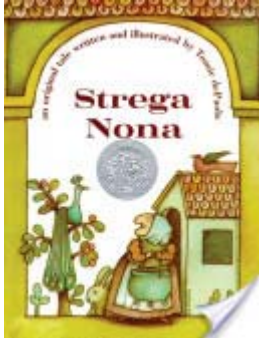
AUTHOR: Tomie de Paola

ILLUSTRATOR : Tomie de Paola

GRADE LEVEL: 3rd

DURATION: 90 minutes

DE PAOLA, Tomie. “Strega Nona”. United States: Aladdin; Reprint edition, 1979, p.p.32



Goals/Aims/Objectives

Students will be able to...

1. Understand what it means to be responsible by sharing personal experiences.
2. Discover the importance of making good choices in order to show responsibility.
3. Explore ways to follow through on their commitments to take responsibility for their own actions.

EFL Lesson Foci: (20 minutes)

- Vocabulary: responsibility word/phrase cards: reliable, accountable, to have self-control, the consequences of my actions, fulfilling all my obligations, if I mess up I will never give up, you can count on me to do what I say I am going to do, put the blame on me, set up priorities, use good judgment.
- Grammatical Structure: use context clues to decide the meaning of words.
- Phonemic Awareness: sound isolation: what's the sound that starts these words -turtle, time and teeth? What's the sound in the middle of these words -beet, meal and read? What's the sound at the end of these words -bed, seed and mad?
- Cultural Focus: a little look at Italy.
- Reading & Writing: read to confirm or revise information. Write to enhance fluency by writing with complete sentences.
- Listening and Speaking: interact with information presented in diverse media.

Warm-Up Activity: (15 minutes)

- Discussion Starters:
 1. What was Big Anthony's responsibility?
 2. What happened because he was not responsible?
 3. What was his consequence?

Reading and Response Activities: (40 minutes)

5. Take turns to read the book “Strega Nona” out loud.
6. Introduce the “Responsibility Song” www.youtube.com/watch?v=aMP_J-jkmr8
7. Individual Work: provide students the lyrics of the song for them to follow the song while it is been played. Then, they will have to circle the words/phrases they think best describe what is to be responsible.
8. Whole Group Activity: share their work and discuss the different words. Children take turns writing words on the whiteboard. Why do you think these words help you understand what responsibility is? In your own words, can you tell me what is to be responsible? Discuss and explain their ideas. Record definitions on a chart to keep it posted.
9. Reading Response Journals: children will write about an experience of a time they think they have shown responsibility or not shown responsibility for their actions. They will describe what they did, how they did, what work well, what did not work, and the consequences for their action. What could you have done differently? What was good about the way in which you reacted in that specific situation?

Wrap-Up (15 minutes)


- ✓ Making connections: discuss the meaning of responsibility and consequence.


Resources and Materials


- Video “Responsibility Song”
- Song lyrics
- Markers/Crayons/ Color pencils
- Pencils
- Journals
- Responsibility word/phrases cards
- Whiteboard


ANNEX # 17 (ATTRIBUTES OF RESPONSIBLE PEOPLE)


HOW TO BE A RESPONSIBLE PERSON (AND FEEL GREAT!)


 **When you agree to do something, do it.** If you let people down, they'll stop believing you. When you follow through on your commitments, people take you seriously.

 **Answer for your own actions.** Don't make excuses or blame others for what you do. When you take responsibility for your actions you are saying "I am the one who's in charge of my life."

 **Take care of your own matters.** Don't rely on adults to remind you when you're supposed to be somewhere or what you're supposed to bring. You take the responsibility.

 **Be trustworthy.** If somebody trusts you to borrow or take care of something, take care of it. If somebody tells you something in confidence, keep it to yourself. It's important for people to know they can count on you.

 **Always use your head.** Think things through and use good judgment. When you use your head you make better choices. That shows your parents they can trust you.

 **Don't put things off.** When you have a job to do, do it. Doing things on time helps you take control of your life and shows that you can manage your own affairs.

<http://www.goodcharacter.com/YCC/BeingResponsible.html>

ANNEX # 18 (LESSON PLAN #9 – RESPONSIBILITY)

BOOK: Strega Nona

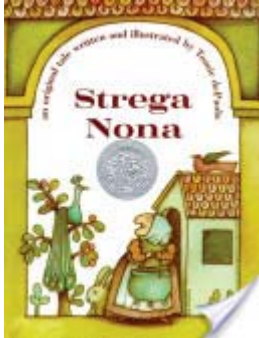
AUTHOR: Tomie de Paola

ILLUSTRATOR : Tomie de Paola

GRADE LEVEL: 3rd

DURATION: 90 minutes

DE PAOLA, Tomie. "Strega Nona". United States: Aladdin; Reprint edition, 1979, p.p.32



Goals/Aims/Objectives

Students will be able to...

8. Explore ways to show how to be responsible in different settings and/or surroundings.
9. Understand the attributes of a responsible person.
10. Use their experience and acquired knowledge to create useful tools to promote and encourage responsibility in the community.

EFL Lesson Foci: (20 minutes)

- Vocabulary: responsibility word/phrase cards: reliable, accountable, to have self-control, the consequences of my actions, fulfilling all my obligations, if I mess up I will never give up, you can count on me to do what I say I am going to do, put the blame on me, set up priorities, use good judgment.
- Grammatical Structure: read high frequency words with automaticity.
- Phonemic Awareness: Phonemic Segmentation: stretching names: teacher model with a rubber band how to stretch out a word as the word is said. Do the same thing with children's names. _____(child's name) how do you do? Who's that friend right next to you?
- Cultural Focus: a little look at Italy.
- Reading & Writing: write about what students think in order to help them organize, recall, and understand important information.
- Listening & Speaking: show respect when speaking and listening about a topic.

Warm-Up Activity: (15 minutes)

- Discussion Starters:
 1. What does it mean to be a responsible person? Describe some characteristics.

2. What are some of your responsibilities, at school, at home, with yourself, with your friends, with the world, with the environment? (Try to keep the conversation away from the issue of “chores”)
3. How can we handle irresponsible people?

Reading and Response Activities: (40 minutes)

6. Introduce the six attributes of responsible people on the whiteboard. Children have to think examples for each behavior and then, for each example they will brainstorm ways of handling irresponsible people.
7. Role playing: turn the examples given into role-playing situations. In pairs, first they will have to role-play the irresponsible behavior, and then, the responsible one. Have the rest of the class comment on the role-plays.
8. Reflective writing: How responsible are you? For each of the attributes, rate yourself on a scale of one to five (1=not good/ 5=terrific). Give an example of how you are either responsible or irresponsible for each attribute, and what you could do to improve.

Wrap-Up (15' minutes)

- ✓ Compromise: Make a chart entitled “Responsibilities”, with the headings SELF, FRIENDS, SCHOOL, TEACHER.

Resources and Materials

- Whiteboard
- Paper
- Markers/Crayons/ Color pencils
- Pencils

FINAL PROJECT – RESPONSIBILITY

Handbook: How to be a Responsible Student

Students will work in groups of three to answer the following: What happens when we don’t work hard to reach our goals? (Check on the Responsibility chart). They will pretend someone from outer space has come to Earth and needs direction on responsibility to create a handbook. Each page will begin with the following statement: A Responsible Student _____. Illustrate each page and put together for a handbook.

http://www.c-tec.edu/HS/images/stories/Career_Development/lesson_plans/LP1-RESPONSIBLE.pdf

ANNEX # 19 (HANDBOOK SAMPLES)

You have, to responsible
of:



A
L
f

- Clean up your bedroom
- Take care of the environment.
- Think in other people.
- I know that this planet doesn't matter you but there's do a lot of people live.
- Have self control.
- Take care of cleaning your self.

that are fast
thinks
You can do to
be responsible.

Homework

I can be responsible if I don't mess the house. When I do my homework on time. When I wake up on time in the morning to go to school to learn. When I am brushing teeth all the time. I eat.



Paula Medaya 4th 2nd of December 2014

Responsible

Responsible is been doing all the things that people say to you. For example in the school you have to do your homework or classwork. In your house your responsibility is help to your mother or father, clean your bedroom and help your mother cleaning the dishes. Your responsibility in the world is don't cut the trees or other things.

(Illustration of a girl thinking)

I am doing my homework and classwork.

Responsibility

Responsibility is doing the things that people say to you.

Responsibility



Responsible is for exaple: Do my homework, take a shower, brush my teeth, study, eat at the exact times, behave with parents, sleep early, don't forget the homework, do exercises, wash my hands, help my mom to fold clothes. Well now that you know what is responsible you know a new thing and you don't have to ask what is responsible again.

TIMELINE

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November				December		
Research																	
Thesis proposal																	
Research																	
Pre Test Application																	
Data Compilation and tabulation																	
Realistic Fiction in the EFL class																	
Hypothesis Verification																	
Final Product																	

PARA GRADOS ACADÉMICOS DE LICENCIADOS (TERCER NIVEL)

PONTIFICIA UNIVERSIDAD CATÓLICA DEL ECUADOR

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